IN THE DARK

ILLUISTRATED













FRANCIS A. BURDETT

The Blind Builder

DECORATED WITH A FEW OF HIS PETS.

THE HOUSE THE BLIND-MAN BUILT

ILLUSTRATED



A SYNOPSIS

OF A BLIND-MANS' METHODS OF BUILDING A HOUSE, SHOWING COURAGE AND PATIENCE SELDOM FOUND IN HUMAN BEINGS. ILLUSTRATING ACCOMPLISHED PROOF, AND THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION OF MIND OVER MISFORTUNE, SHOWING THE UNCANNY SKILL AND FORTITUDE OF A BLINDMAN 65 YEARS OLD. A LESSON FOR EVERY LIVING PERSON.

By

WILLIAM VAHRENKAMP

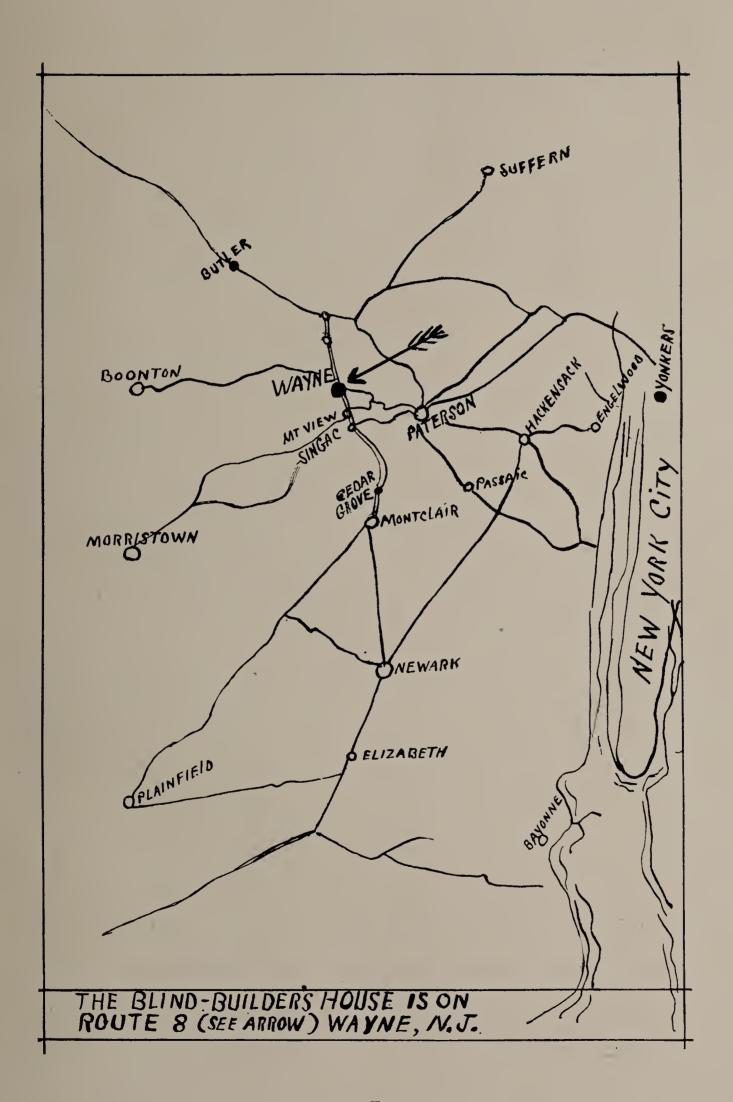
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Drawings by

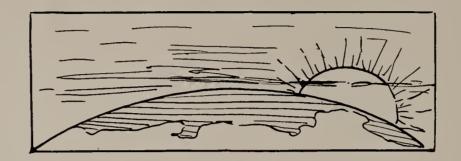
J. W. GREENHALGH

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FORE-WORD



I N this day and age of scientific wonders, it is hardly possible to think of any new thing produced or act performed that will enthuse people long enough to mention it more than once.

A blind man building a house! This may sound like a fable or maybe stated by some cynic as a joke, or even used to denote an utter impossibility.

Much has been written about clever and seemingly impossible accomplishments of the blind. All kinds of ornamental and useful articles are variously exhibited throughout the world and viewed with awe and astonishment, and often the expression "It seems impossible to believe", and "Why, people with their full sight could do no better", and many other expressions of satisfaction. Much of this merchandise finds it way into homes of the people through the regular trade channels and is accepted as first-class ware.

YES

A Blind Man Did Build A House

And if others in like physical handicap were lauded and commended for producing praiseworthy work, what words are there that can properly define the man that built a house, 3 stories high, seven rooms, bath and large attic,—on the Newark-Pompton Turnpike, Wayne, N. J. A Dutch Colonial house, having those difficult angles, that only experienced builders can rightly erect. Let the reader close his eyes and imagine he is going to do some simple work, or try walking around the house, or find some article. Do this and he will experience a deep interest in the BLIND BUILDER AND THE HOUSE BUILT IN THE DARK, mentioned in this book. No one with sight can imagine the moods and tenses of one having lost the sight. Any physical defect, especially blindness will cause one to be more or less depressed and discouraged; but it must be said of Mr. Burdett that he always is in the best humor and his repartee keen; one is yet to hear him complain or speak of his misfortune.

He lost his sight after he was fifty years of age; thirteen years later—and at a time in life when most people look for retirement and ease, he began to build a house. This task would invite a look of incredulity, even if pro-

posed by one born blind and of whom something could be expected. Besides he is a jeweler by trade and not a carpenter.

Look at the picture of the house. It has seven rooms, the plan is meritoriouse; the outlines are tasty. Note the window arrangement for light, the symetry of the Dormer windows and the Dutch Colonial roof with the general appearance of the building.

This building was erected by touch in the darkness, for the builder cannot see. Not only darkness through lack of sight, but he often worked into the late hours of night when most people prepared to retire.

Hundreds that chanced to pass the unfinished building at night while the doleful sound of the Blind Builder's hammer reverberated through the shallow interior, can truly testify to this seemingly preternatural paradox. Many things seemingly absurd yet true, enter into the story. Most builders have at least one helper and do all figuring carefully with pencil and paper and are guided by plans and specifications.

THE BLIND BUILDER did all the figuring mentally; carried the complete plans and specifications in his mind, and had to remember the progress of the structure as it proceeded. It took him just two and a half years to construct this house and at no time during this period was he not able to cite the hundred or more needed things in the

many parts of the building and tell exactly where he had laid this or that tool and just the stock he had on hand and the material needed.

LEAVES OTHERS WITHOUT EXCUSE

The first handicap was his total blindness. The second, his trade is that of a jeweler and not a carpenter. The third, he had to start without a dollar; all he owned in the world was the lot bought on time payments; and no one would lend a blind man money to build; neither had he plans and specifications to file, to get a loan.

THE BLIND BUILDER'S ability in using tools, learned in former years, accompanied with a sensitive touch, encouraged him in his early stages of blindness to construct small chairs, dressers and tables for children; also fancy trays, bird houses and other articles which he often sold or gave away. After this he built a two-room shack near his present place. These experiences gave him the confidence that he could build a real house.

Now, all he had to start with was a vacant lot; faith in his own ability to build the house; a keen interest to do it; a cheerful disposition; a determined will to carry it through, and a credit account with a good-natured lumber dealer. And it remained for the BLIND BUILDER to show the world a new courage; a new kind of patience; yes, a new sort of persistence and an unheard of miracu-

lous accomplishment that can best be understood by reading carefully the pages of this book.

Because of this genuine wonder of the age, an achievement contrary to the established course of things, this brief summary is set forth.



To The Reader

To get the best out of this book it is suggested that the reader constantly keep in mind that the contents speak about a man totally blind.

And as the various accomplishments are read and understood, let the reader stop and meditate, and preadventure try some simple feat with eyes closed.

The suggestions mentioned on the several pages immediately following, are purposely proposed to impress on the mind of the reader the painful emotions excited by lack of sight when one trys to do something out of the ordinary: and the utter state of helplessness of one blind in contradistinction of the Blind-Builder herein commended.

Begin Reading This Book in the Proper Mental Attitude

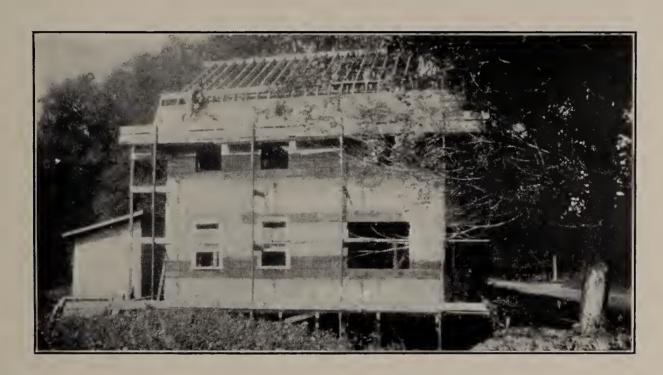
I T is indeed quite impossible for anyone not having observed the BLIND BUILDER at work during the years he patiently labored, to understand the true nature of his accomplishment.

Details not encountered by the carpenter with sight, and ingenious methods devised to overcome difficulties, together with the seemingly uncanny certainty with which he did everything from climbing ladders; stepping over open floor beams; leaning over eaves of the roof; lifting heavy timber; always hitting the nail on the head; to remembering hundreds of small details that not one percent of workmen would remember if it was written on paper.

TRY THIS OUT:

It is said, no one can understand an experience as well as the man that passed through it, no matter how explicitly it is told.

Let the reader in company with a friend locate a two and one-half story frame house in course of erection; then at night when the moon is out of sight and it is pitch dark, stand across the street and think of the house here mentioned. Ask the friend to go over and saw a board. Then ask him to nail it up. Listen carefully to the sound of the hammer and buzz of the saw. While this is going on, imagine that the BLIND BUILDER is working over there. Let your imagination be magnified by the picture below.



See the Blind Builder on the Scaffold.

Before he decided on a house 26 feet wide he had a small foundation built 16 x 16 feet to accommodate a two-room shack he built near by. Changing his mind again to his original Dutch Colonial plan he rested part of the sill on this wall and built an overhang as seen above. Later a mason put in a cellar wall seen on Page 4.

The small shed in rear is the tool house he made in sections.

And now, as in thought and imagination, without rising from your chair place yourself on the opposite side of the road from the BLIND MAN'S house in WAYNE, N. J. Stand there in silent meditation looking at that unfinished structure; concentrate your mind on the object before you. Think of the various angles, bias cuts, and measurements; the hazardous height and dangerous open spaces; the peril to life and limb working up there in inclement weather; or while the strong wind is blowing; a little sleet or snow now and then.

Think of the different tools, nails, and other materials that had to be handled to put that structure there; and note how plumb and square everything is. Then, as you are soliloquising, bring to mind that it is the ingenious work of a blind man.

CONTINUE ON WITH THE IMAGINATION, IT DOESN'T COST ANYTHING.



Turnpike, Wayne, N. J.

Now walk across
the street with your
eyes closed and climb
up the ladder to the
second floor (eyes
closed) then walk
over the open floor
beams to the tools



Adjusting Staging.

hanging on nails; feel for a cross cut and a rip saw; you will need these for a job on the first floor; then walk back over the open beams to the ladder.

Continue on as the BLIND BUILDER did; climb down the ladder to the first floor where the sub floor is already laid. Arrange two wooden bucks and lay six planks 2"x8"x16 feet long on each of these supports. Then cut out the needed tenon of each end; push them end-up through the floor beams; climb the ladder to the second floor and pull these heavy planks up one at a time.

Then arrange some staging firm and strong to stand on, and place these heavy floor beams over-head; 16" center, no more and no less, and fasten them down with 20 penny nails.

Certainly, if you can get a faint idea how the BLIND BUILDER handled, sawed and placed six floor beams, you will get a fair understanding of how he juggled,



Placing Floor Beams.

nursed and humored 76 of them into place on the three floors.

There are so many different operations connected with building a house, that the reader can readily pick some simple job and act it out blindfolded in the home or elsewhere; and since the BLIND MAN built this house, the reader has the assurance that the BLIND BUILDER had to do that same thing in total darkness.

There are new houses being built all over the country, and no one would object to a person trying out a few stunts on their new building, especially if the reader explains the interesting reason for the request.

The privilege would more readily be granted if the reader offered a few hours free labor while experimenting blindfolded.

Most owners, no doubt, would be overjoyed at such an offer and furnish the applicant an opportunity to

put up studs, lay flooring, put in window frames, hang the sash, sheath the outside, or shingle the roof, etc. etc.

It would be well to let others know the exact time you begin to work on the roof. There is a certain thrill in it for both yourself and the audience.

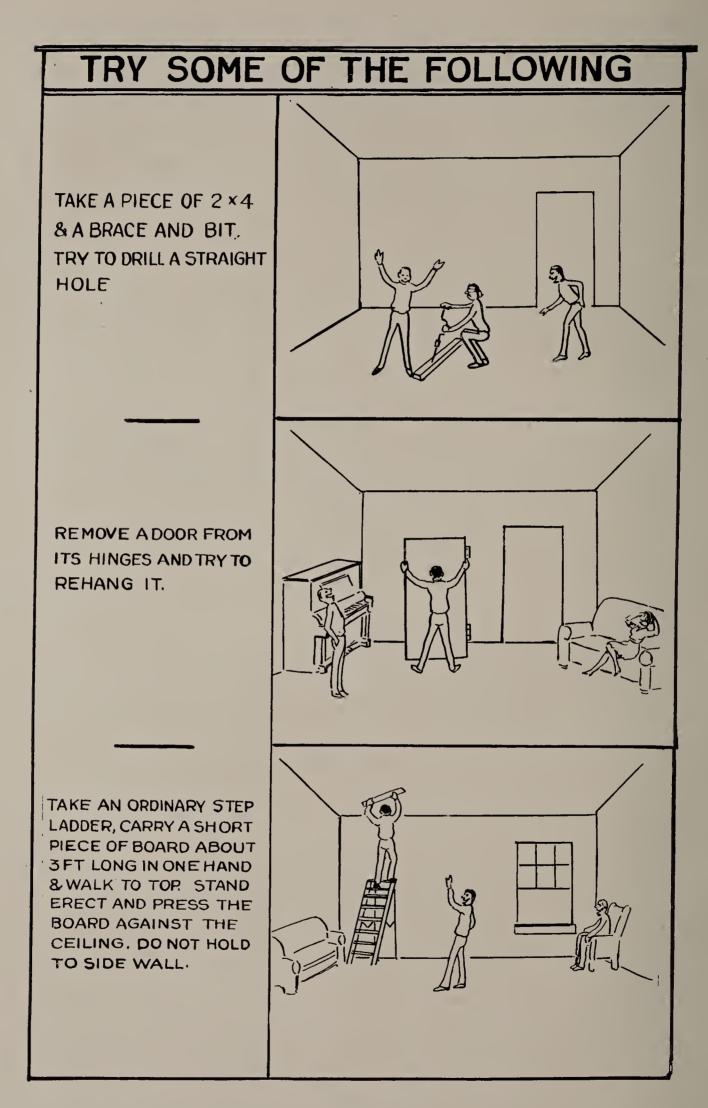
Those on the ground will stand gazing at you somewhat breathless and wondering how soon you are going to land in the hospital or morgue; while you will be getting an experience to better understand the BLIND BUILDER.

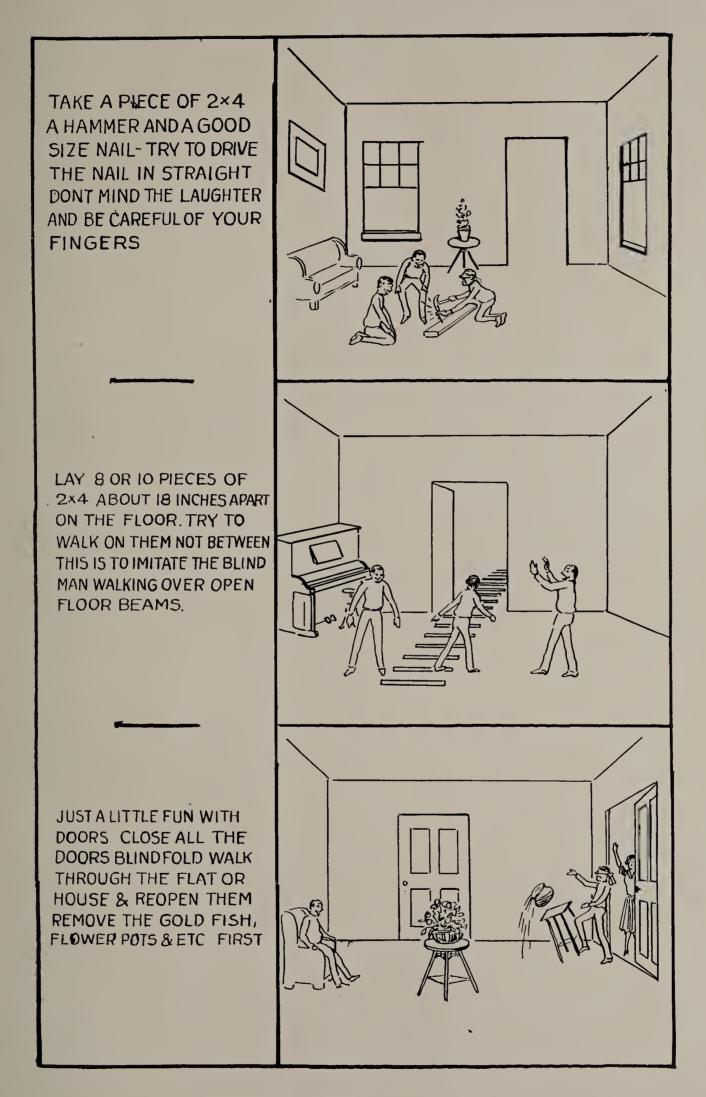
At any rate it is easy to think of several jobs and devise some contrivance in your home to create the right mental attitude.

It is suggested that members of the family in company with invited guests partake in the experiments.

Some of the acts proposed herein, will not only give the visitors and the family a very pleasant time, but will as well provide everyone present with food for thought; and above all else will establish in the minds of the participants, the fact that the performance of the BLIND MAN herein extolled and commended as a "Miracle Builder" is not exaggerated or overstated.

These suggestions may also inspire someone of the gathering to attempt a few of the more simple acts of the BLIND BUILDER: such as "walking along the top ridge of the roof", or carry a ladder on the shoulder up a long ladder to the base of the chimney on the roof; lean it against said brick stack, climb up to the smoke hole and feel if the mason carried out orders as agreed, etc.





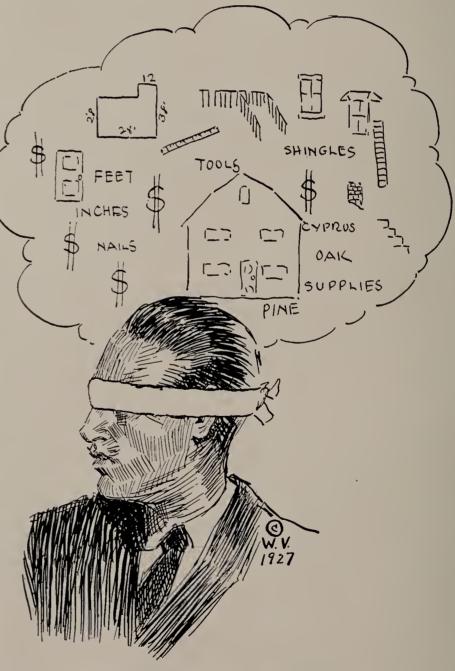


PLACE A LONG LADDER AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE; BLINDFOLD AND CLIMB TO TOP RUNG. DONT MIND THE SENSATION, ITS ALL IN THE IMAGINATION. GROUP AROUND A TABLE AND WRITE NOTES OF AT LEAST TEN LINES; SEE WHO CAN WRITE ON A STRAIGHT LINE AN OLD FASHIONED GAME OF BLIND MAN'S BUFF WILL BEHELPFUL TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE BLIND BUILDER

WARNING

TO those that would attempt to duplicate the MIRACLE BUILDER'S feat, we would advise that there are two natural assets most necessary; i. e.; a cheerful disposition under adverse conditions, (he was never heard complaining) and a remarkable memory; he had to carry all the details of construction, and the plans and specifications in his mind throughout the entire period.

Unless you have the remarkable memory of the Blind Builder, you will in all p robability forget what been has a n d done what is yet needed; become stalled in your operations and people begin to laugh.



REMARKABLE MEMORY

DONT

A POLOGY is made for the use of this word; but use it we must. "THERE'S A REASON." It cuts off more snappy than the expression "do not", and it has more force behind it.

Most people hate this word; they hear it so often during their brief life here on earth, that they become rebellious every time they hear it. However, even at the risk of losing the reader's friendship, we are going to continue on with it.

We are not trying to appear important by don'ting. the reader, even though it may appear so.

A FEW DON'TS

Right here it may be well to begin with the stern command and caution the reader that both minor difficulties and terrible disasters often follow in the wake of disobedience to "DON'T". And, if you try to remember that you need to order cellar windows by putting a small piece of glass in your pocket, you will surely cut your fingers and instantly think of something else, forgetting how the glass got there.

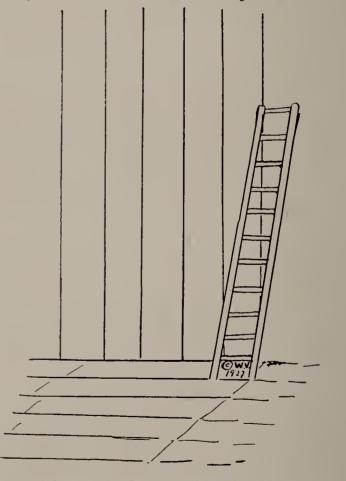
Don't put a piece of moulding in your right pocket and say, by this I am going to remember to order some material. You will waste more time standing around trying to recall what you intended to remember than by any other way.

Numerous don'ts could be added, such as don't forget to nail a board across the door openings that lead to the ground, and the same around well holes cut out for stairs. Don't climb a ladder that is leaning 99% against atmosphere or the same percentage in a hole that leads to the cellar. Don't forget to carefully arrange and fasten all the outside staging from the ground to the roof.

If you do not heed some of these don'ts you will in all probability not be able to tell your friends of the delightful experience you had building a house in the dark by touch. The BLIND BUILDER took all these and many more precautions; finished the job, and at this writing is amongst the living.

It has long since been said, "It is better to say 'There

he goes' than 'Here he lies.'" However, it is a well known fact that there are always those that are extremely self willed and in the face of all danger pass the safety sign. To these we can only say; "Go to it." but don't blame us for putting temptation in your way; nor for the wailing of the mourners.



90 Per Cent Against
Atmosphere

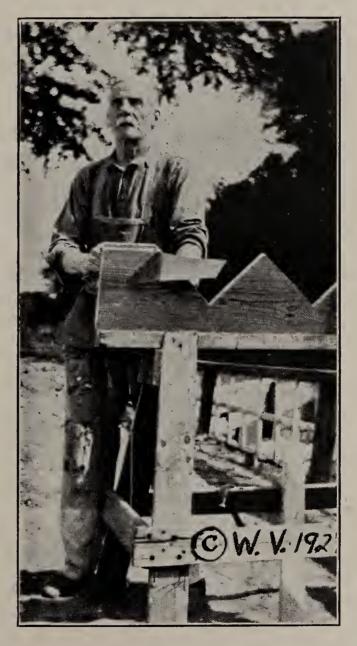
How The Blind Builder did Some of the Work.

WHILE it is understood that every man does not think nor work the same as his brother craftsman, yet nearly everyone is open for suggestions and willing to listen to his fellowman, "How he did it."

Then, if he has a plan or procedure of his own, he becomes convinced that his own plan is best after all, or he learns something, and added to what he has, makes it better than it was.

In deference to the BLIND BUILDER, however, we would ask everyone not totally blind, or those not willing to see this from a blind man's viewpoint, to suspend criticism; for blind men resort to many means not generally used by those with sight.

Although it is said by many that the finished house is by far a more substantial building than the average erected



Pattern for Stair Riser.

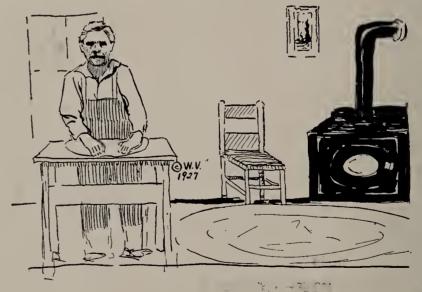
these days and is beyond the pale of criticism.

And it is said without loss or injury to the subject, that the work of the BLIND BUILDER has not only received the approbation of one hundred percent of those that inspected the house, but his marvelous achievement grouping around in the darkness, over two and one half years, has earned him the title of "THE LINDY OF THE BLIND."

Did Much Preliminary Thinking

In a secluded place not so far away from the Highway, and which the BLIND BUILDER also erected a few years ago, he meditated many hours, yes, days, during the early stages of the propogation of the thought to build. No doubt it was during the winter months and he had

hours of time between tending the
fire in the range,
baking bread, whittling away on some
article in the course
of the making; or



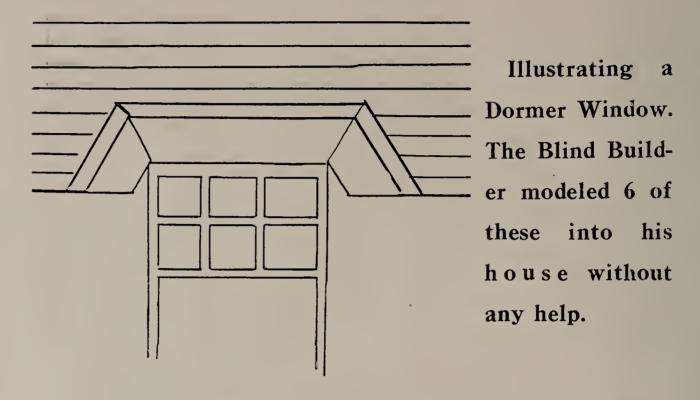
Mixing Dough



His Two Room Bungalow
—Temporary Quarters—

smiling at some new idea that struck him; some thought that overcame some difficulty that embarrassed him in his plan of operation for that home they so often spoke about. Instead of spending days, yes weeks, deciding on plans and specifications, and making numerous visits to an architects office and finally selecting after many wearisome decisions just the type house desired, the class of material to be used and the hundred or more details that enter into building a house analyzed and settled, the BLIND BUILDER by bending his mind toward the object with singleness of thought and keen interest did all this without any outside help or suggestion, and stored away on the shelves of his mind the plans and specifications as he thought them out.

**, *.



Did they not always admire that "Dutch Colonial" house where they once lived in Rhode Island? With the sloping roof and Dormer windows? Was that not always their final decision when the question of owning a home was debated? Yes, and now, being blind and the mould was cast to build after these many years, what about the needed Blue Prints? Surely a builder needs plans of the contemplated building; at least there must be something handy to refer to now and then as a sort of surety reference.

He became blind

15 years ago. The

Dutch Colonial

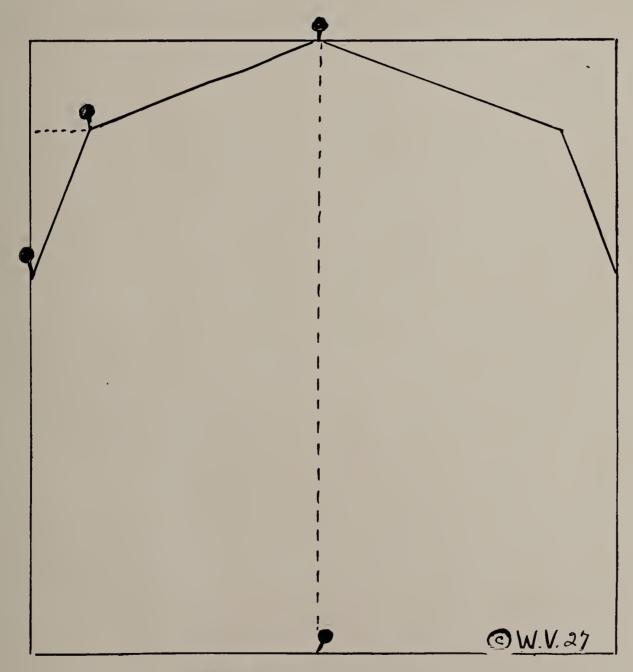
roof was then the

rage. He carried
these plans in his
mind since then.

Some sort of plans must be arranged to establish those difficult angles of the roof. Everything else is clear but the proper pitch of that roof; that must join together with a snug fit in three places and fasten to a plate over the studs, and extend to an overhang of 12 inches.

DREW HIS OWN PLANS.

He planned to build a house 26 feet wide and 29 feet high. Height of ceiling first floor 9 ft. second floor $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet, attic floor to ridge board 9 ft. Total height including sill, plates, etc. 29 feet.

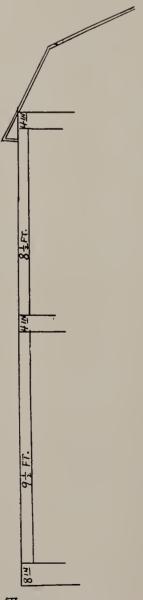


Drew His Own Plans.

HE CUT OUT FRONT ELEVATION AND ROOF FORMATION.

So the BLIND BUILDER cut a piece of cardboard 26 inches wide and 29 inches long; scale 1" to 1'. Then he figured 19'4" along the left edge of the cardboard. He arrived at this by the figures below:

Sill		.8
Stud 1st Floor		9.6
Plate over studs		.4
2nd Floor studs		8.6
Top plate over studs		.4
	Total	19.8



THE ABOVE SHOWS

HOW HE FIGURES

At this point he put a tack indicating the place where the hips were to join on the top plate.

These figures, he estimated in his mind would make a formation quite symetrical and pleasing to the eye. No doubt he gave considerable thought to this part of his problem, for the finished house does appear pleasing to look at and is about as nicely proportioned as any one could make it.

(Note Page 4.)

SLOPE OF HIP.

Then he measured on up from that point $5\frac{1}{2}$ " and marked that with a tack. Then 3" to right angle and put a tack there. From this point down to the first tack mentioned gave him the slope of the hip.

UPPER END OF HIP TO CENTER OF ROOF OR RIDGE BOARD.

His cardboard being 26" wide or the exact width of the building according to the scale, he measured 13" to the center and put a tack there. Then he measured the distance from this tack to the one that marked from top of the hip and this gave him the exact length the rafters must be from the hips to the ridge board. He now had one-half of the desired formation of the front elevation; the tacks indicating the lines.

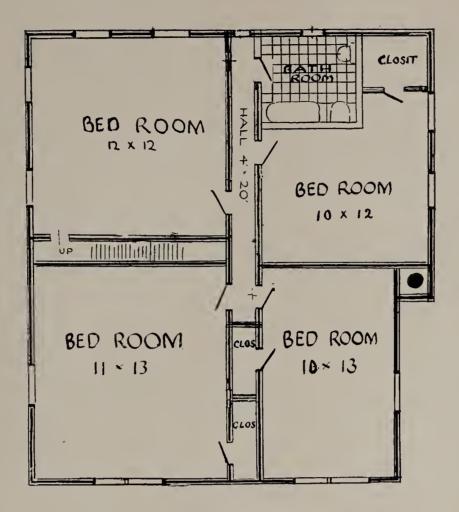
Then he carefully laid his steel rule against these tacks and cut along the edge with a sharp knife; folded over the cardboard in center, cut out the other side, unfolded it and exhibited a perfect front elevation; scale as aforesaid—1 inch to 1 foot.

This formation acted as his guide throughout the entire construction and gave him the exact formation of the roof; the needed bevelout for all the hips and rafters; and regulated the length and thickness of all the studs, plates, etc. By cutting the hips 7 feet instead of 6 feet

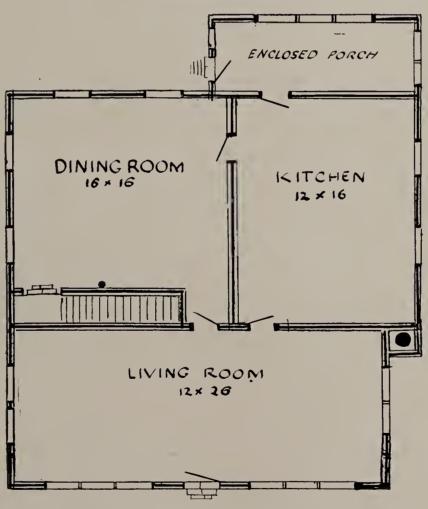
long gave him the 12 inch overhang.

Having this fixed in his mind, he had little difficulty in laying out the rooms on both floors (see floor plan on opposite page). To add space to the second floor rooms, 4 ft. of which was to be taken up by the hall, he made the rear part of the building 28 feet wide, 2 feet wider than the front. (Remember you are reading about a blind man.)





SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

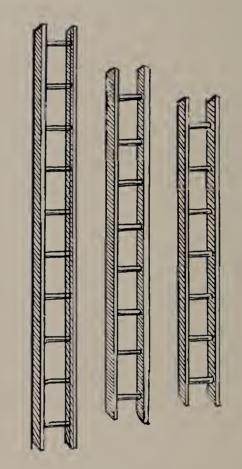
FLOOR PLANS

After he had acted as his own architect and cut out his own plans, and also tucked away in the pigeon holes of his mind, all the needed details and specifications of the building that was to be, he began to make his own ladders; he made three in sizes ranging from 10 to 22 feet, all of which appeared as if they came from some ladder manufacturer.

Then he bought 2x4 studs for uprights 4x4 for

sills and sheathing boards. With these he made a sectional tool house $8 \times 8 \times 10$ feet high. These sections were hauled up to the lot and put up on stilts 6 feet behind the building line.

Later a platform and railing was connected with the new building. This tool house can be seen in the picture on Page 13.

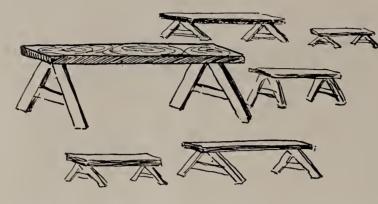


This small house was comfortable on the inside; and here he often kept warm and meditated on many of the problems; besides being a safe place for the many tools and other valuables that accumulated as time passed and the work progressed.

The tools illustrated on opposite page are but a mite of those that he possesses and can skillfully use.



Illustrating the tools the Blind Man used. The uncanny skill with which the Blind Builder used these tools caused many people to stare and doubt his complete blindness.



He made a half dozen wooden bucks.

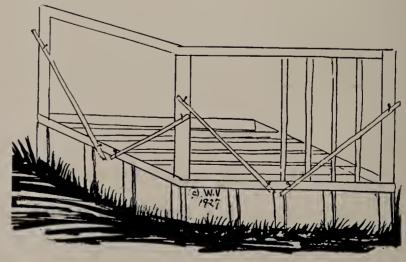
After he laid and leveled the sills which

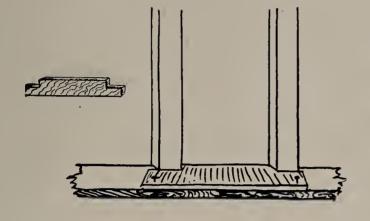
are 8" square, he cut the first floor beams to fit. Then he proceeded to put up the corner posts on the first floor. These he controlled by tacking 1 x 2 inch lengths from stud to sill and squared them with the large steel square.

After this he put the plate on these studs, then he filled in between, all the needed uprights 16" center. This center he conveniently arrived at by using a pattern which he made for this purpose.

(See illustration of large steel square and center pattern on opposite page.) He has an inventive mind and seems to be able to contrive a means to overcome any difficulty.

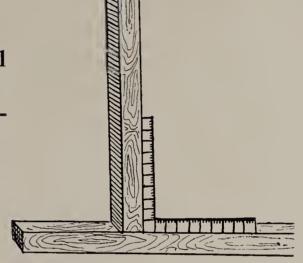
Illustrating how he held the studs in place while he squared them.





Illustrating a pattern the Blind Man made to get a uniform 16" centre.

Showing the large steel square with which he did accurate work.

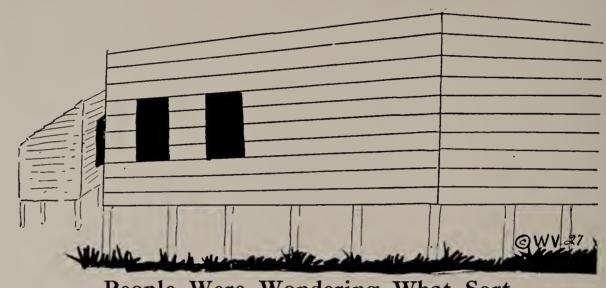


Instead of continuing on up with the frame of the building, he laid the sub floor on the first floor. This gave him a solid footing from which he could more conveniently tackle the job before him. It was now rapidly approaching cold weather so he sheathed the outside of the first floor to keep the cold winds from interfering with his labors.

Of course, people were all wondering who the contractor was, and what sort of a building it was going to be. A rather awkward looking thing with an overhang, two windows and only one story high, above the sill.

Some thought the neighborhood was going to be blessed with a freak that would stand everlastingly before them, offensive to the sight.

But the public did not notice that he had sometime previous, put the plate down for the second floor beams. This awkward appearance remained an eye sore for a long time, even after the BLIND BUILDER laid the second floor beams; and those that knew that the man



People Were Wondering What Sort of Building It Was Going To Be.

behind the job was blind, pitied him as an utter failure.

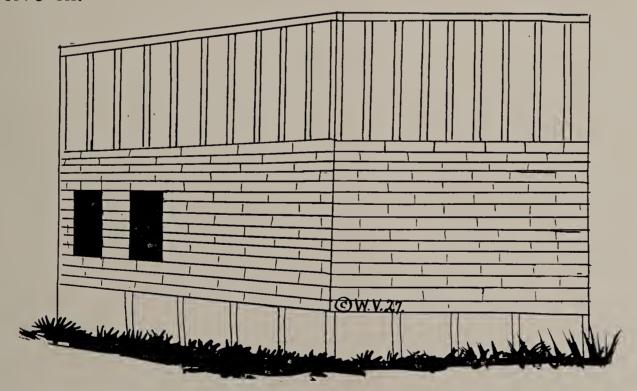
Suddenly there appeared above that solid enclosure of the first floor, a nice even row of uprights all around the plate of the second floor, and on top of this was securely fastened the ribbon for the attic floor beams.

The building was now taking on a somewhat better appearance but the puzzling part was the lack of windows. For this reason many people conjectured one thing or another. As stated before the BLIND BUILDER'S procedure was entirely different than that followed by regular carpenters.

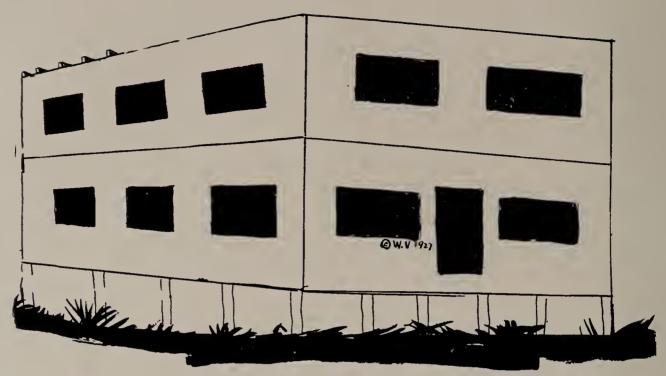
He had to make provision for himself as he went along and do those things most conveniently reached next after the last thing was done.

During the winter, work was not so rapidly accomplished, but by spring all the partition studs were up on the first floor and the door openings nicely arranged; including the sub flooring on the second floor upon which the BLIND BUILDER had overlapped heavy rubberoid material to keep the snow and rain from the first floor.

As the weather began to break, the hundreds of interested people that conjectured many and various things were greeted with a series of nicely cut window frame openings all around the first and second floors; these openings gave the structure a "regular house" appearance. Those that were prematurely opinionated and often openly subtilized depreciatory statements, now raised their eye-brows in surprise and nodded approval. Some said, Why, that building looks as if it is going to be a house to live in.



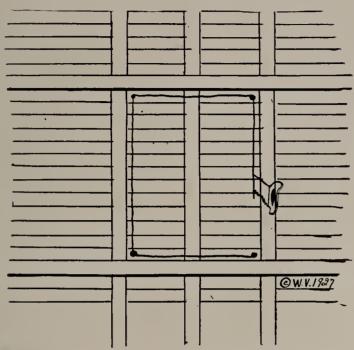
Was now taking on a somewhat better appearance. Still puzzling.



Greeted with a series of nicely cut window frame openings.

Now the BLIND BUILDER did not know the public's mind; but for the fact that he needed the window openings to fasten the outside staging to reach the work on the dormer windows and the roof, they would have been guessing for a while longer. Some folks asked the question of each other, "Well, if it's going to be a regular house, how is he going to get the windows in?" These folks did not know the man behind the job. He never started a board on its way or a nail to its hole except he knew beforehand, the "Why." Of course we do not believe that any of these last named inquisitors were of the building trade for they would know how it could be done even if it was not regular.

The BLIND BUILDER was somewhat in the position of Christopher Columbus, whose crew was ready to throw him overboard; he had to win to save his life.



The illustration to the left shows how the BLIND BUILDER cut out the frame openings from the inside.

Soon after this was done a large truck delivered the window frames for all the openings on the first and

He cut them out from the inside. second floors.



He quickly followed with the frame and sash.

These the BLIND MAN gave a priming coat of paint, then he put them in and they added a goodly percent to the appearance of the building from the outside.

And not long after this he was seen hanging the window sash. This operation required planing and adjusting. Every window in that house slides up and down smoothly and is perfectly fitted.

By this time different tunes were being sung, especially by some habitual songsters of the immediate area, and they began to recognize the BLIND BUILD-ER in his true light. Some would stand near, watch him hit the nails on the head without a



Hitting Nail.

miss, and saw lumber along the edge of a steel square and walk away shaking their heads, meaning "That man is a wonder and a miracle." Well everybody did that very thing that observed him during the two and one half years he builded.

But, there were so many interesting things to be talked about. One of these was—How will he ever get those large triple window frames into the openings? They said, "We give that man credit for being able to do about everything, but how will he ever do that?" While they were soliloquizing, the BLIND BUILDER appeared at the big triplet frame opening, pulling on a rope connected with a block and pulley, which was attached to the second floor beams.

pulled As he away, there suddenly appeared suspended in the air that frame. He evilarge dently had a brace handy to which he tied the rope; then he worked the frame through the opening; with one hand he carefully workthe ed rope up and and with down, the other he adjusted the frame into the opening.

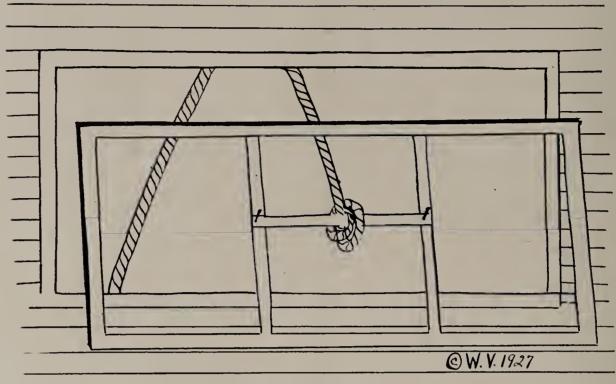
After carefully feeling all over the frame with both hands to see if it was snugly in place on all



Steel Square Guides Saw.

sides, that particular look of satisfaction that is often seen on a boy's face when he did something commendable, spread over his countenance, much to the satisfaction of those that sat lined up on the old village general store's front porch across the way.

Disappearing for a moment, he soon appeared again with hammer and nails and made a permanent job of it, while the said crowd from across the way silently meandered in front of the frame, eyeing it critically to see if it was placed level. They all with one accord looked at each other with a satisfied smile and readjusted themselves on the aforesaid porch.



That Triplet.

After this performance, his fame spread far and near and many people stopped to see for themselves. Expressions of amazement came from hundreds, for now they began to see the different things about the place that they did not observe before. Looking up, the people noticed that the BLIND BUILDER had yet to put up the rafters and hips on the roof. Many expressed the hope that he would hire someone to do that work, fearing he would fall from that height and meet with a serious accident. People now became interested in the man and felt for his safety. Some expressed the hope that he would live to enjoy this house that he so ingeniously labored on; and that he would, from this time on, not take any more unnecessary chances with his life. Their well meant expressions were however of no avail, for his inborn feline felicity for high places, was already mewing to get on that dangerous roof job.

After the BLIND BUILDER laid the attic sub floor, he arranged scaffolds and began the most difficult operation of the whole construction job, and that is: "the Dutch Colonial Roof."

As stated before he did not work along the standard rules of building construction but always did what he felt was best and safest to do next. Before he hauled any considerable weight on the second floor he had all the partitions up on the first floor to support it. This he also did on the second floor before he put any weight on the attic floor. Working alone, he had to do all this first to get a solid footing to reach the roof from the inside.

AGAIN SITTING ALONE.

About eighteen months previous to this roof operation, the BLIND BUILDER sat alone in that little two room bungalow doing all the preliminary mental skirmishing and recorded in his mind, all the details of construction. At that time he cut out a pattern for that much beloved Dutch Colonial Roof and now the moment had come to take that form from off the nail and begin actual work on it.

Again sitting quietly alone, he ran his sensitive fingers over the edge of the form and a look of satisfaction spread over his face. Then as if speaking to someone in an undertone; "This is the center, here is where the ridge board is connected, that is rather a high place to get to; wouldn't



Ran His Sensitive Fingers Over the Edge.

be so bad if those studs were fastened to rafters, but they are not yet, so I'll have to find a way."

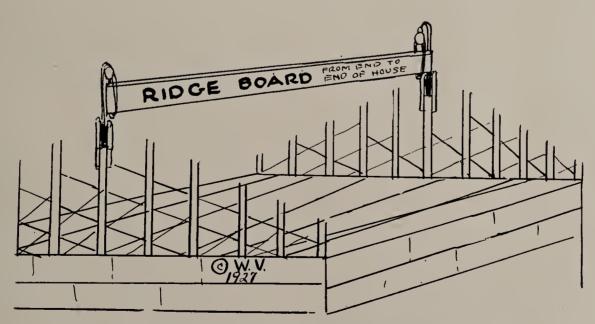
Now what is this ridge board? It is a board that runs from the front of the building to the rear, and is that board to which the rafters are nailed and that forms the top ridge of the roof. He did find a way. He took the center stud down and cut it off six inches; then he nailed a piece of 2 x 4 on each side, thereby forming a pocket; while he had this stud down, he nailed a length of 1 x 2 on, that extended several feet above the pocket. To this he had a rope and pulley. He did the same with the rear stud, then he replaced them in position, tied the rope to each end of that long board, 1"x6"x28' and alternately pulled each end until both ends were above the pocket, then he lowered them in. After he had things more secure so he could work around those parts with a

degree of safety, he nailed both ends fast, and removed the sticks and pulleys.

This is all more easily said and read than done. The illustration below shows about the flimsy state of things as they were at that time on the attic section. Just one misstep or just a moment's forgetfulness would have meant death to the BLIND BUILDER.

READER

Stop right here for a moment: Close your eyes and meditate. Imagine yourself working on and climbing around this building without sight. Could you do it? The BLIND BUILDER was not born blind. This is not an accustomed natural condition with him.



Illustrating the Ridge-Board.

Much could be said about both the man and house at this stage of things. Those that were daily watching the performance either by a swift glance from a passing automobile or more lingeringly, passed and went their way without ever giving the height of that building a second thought. But now, they were fully awake to the real wonders here performed by the touch of a blind man's hands and ingenuity of his mind, and people began to get nervous thinking of the blind man and the work he was doing so high up. Their interest was manifestly display-Everywhere people mentioned THE BLIND BUILD-ER of WAYNE, NEW JERSEY. They came long distances, especially to see the BLIND MAN'S HOUSE and perchance the man himself. There were all kinds and types. Some took all things they saw for granted and others doubted. These would watch him work and while his work was slow it was so correctly performed that they decided he could see just a little.

The public having been duped and fleeced so often in this day and age, one can hardly blame them for being skeptical.

Then again, the work of the BLIND-BUILDER so ably performed and correctly done added considerably to the unbelieving public's discussive skepticism.

Folks came a long distance to see the Blindman at work.

Some stealthily approached the BLIND BUILDER and stood around watching him work to see if he was pulling off some advertising stunt, or was really and truly blind. Some of these did some very peculiar things. Of course they wanted to be certain. But, if some of those that stood before the BLIND MAN in the writer's presence could see themselves in a picture, (and this happened



Some stealthily approached the Blind-Builder and stood around watching him work to ascertain if he was really and truly blind.

often) they would surely feel foolish. One man made the most hideous faces at him, testing the BLIND BUILDER. Probably he thought, if the BLIND MAN could see at all, just a very little bit, he would ask him if he was non-compasmentes, for making those faces, and in that way discover that the blind man could see.

A TRUCK LOAD



"Here's the Place! Stop!" At this command a large truck filled with mechanics came to a stop in front of the Blind Builder's house.

"Say, isn't a Blind man building this house?" asked one of the group, evidently the only one that had the correct information. A neighbor to whom the question was directed answered in the affirmative.

"There, now, I told you so." There seemed to be more behind that "I Told you so" than the mere retort.

At this assurance, they all jumped out of the truck and stood gazing at the structure.

There were some wearing the garb of the masons, carpenters, plumbers and helpers. Soon they found their way all over the building, inside and out, and finally reassembled at the front again.

"Come on," one said to a well dressed man, evidently the employer, "Hand over that ten."

Evidently there had been a bet made and this accounts for the joy the same man exhibited when his question was answered in the affirmative when they

first drove up.

Finally a man came out of the front door and jestingly called to the man in the business suit: "Didn't I tell you up on the job that a blind man could do better work than your gang carpenters?" "Say, of did you notice that blind man countersink those screws?" Still another said that he took the blind man's steel square and found the window frames all level and square.



Countersinking
Holes for Screws.

At this co-mingling of thoughts, several men volunteered the remark that the blind man may not be altogether blind. Whereupon a half dozen of those good natured mechanics that had just come away from a building job a few miles up the road, tip-toed in and applied several tests: One of which was to carefully and swiftly pass a hand before his eyes; at this performance they eagerly watched for the flicker of the eye lid.

"Yes, siree, that man is blind," said the well dressed man. "If I hadn't come here myself I would have called you a fibber, Jim."

"You did about that much, boss," Jim replied, "But it cost you ten."

Right then and there the boss was hazed by the crowd into paying that wager and said, "It's worth ten anyway. I am going to declare a holiday and bring the whole gang down here. After that I'll get that ten back by getting better service.

The compliments these men paid the BLIND BUILDER as they left would fill a small book. One of the parting remarks overheard was, "That man seems to understand every branch of the building trade.

He Lead Them Out

A group of men and women stopped in to see the miracle builder just before the setting of the sun. They marveled at his accurate workmanship, general ability and speed in putting up ceiling boards on the back porch.

In their extreme interest, they did not notice the going down of the sun and were standing in darkness. Then they all with one accord expressed a realization of the wonder before them. Soon it was so dark that they could not see the blind man at work, still the hammer sounded. Then one of the ladies said; "This is the strangest position I was ever placed in. He hammers and talks as if it was day time."

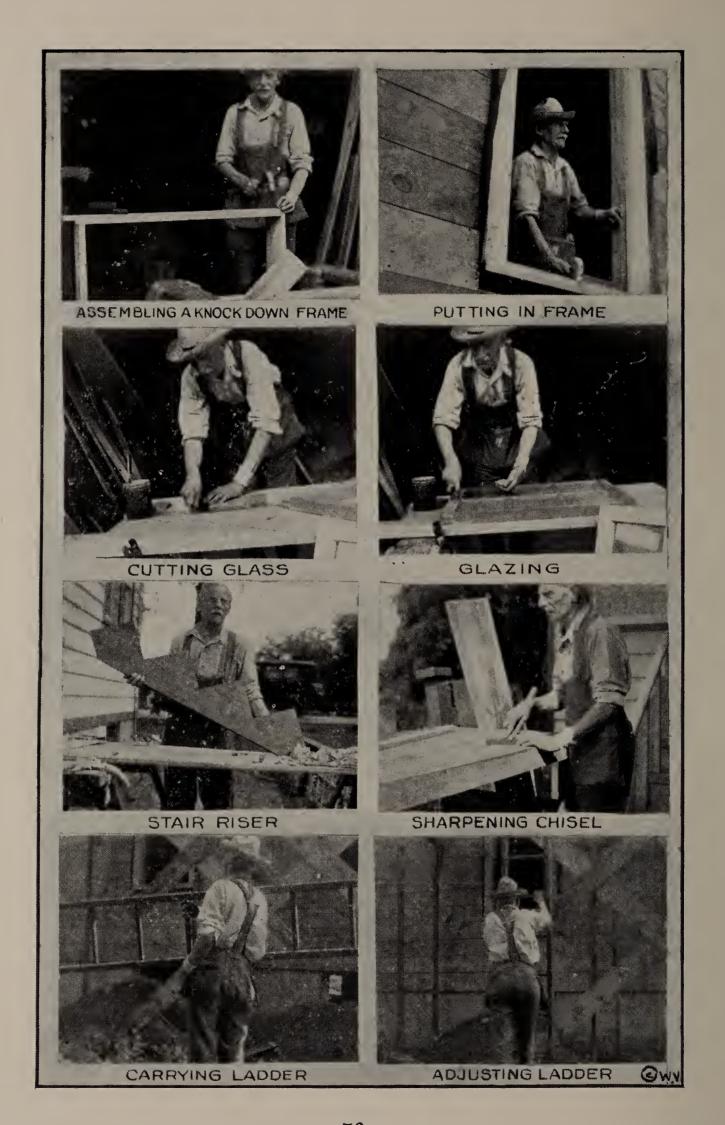
The group were huddled together; their minds blended with fear and sympathy as only a singular situation of this kind could impress the mind, and one said, "It was really uncanny, and it seemed as if he had an invisible helper." This remark was soon followed by a general conversation with a ghostly background. Standing there in the darkness, amidst this paradoxical reality, exchanging ghostly stories, soon made the place appear untenable and they asked the Blind man the way out.

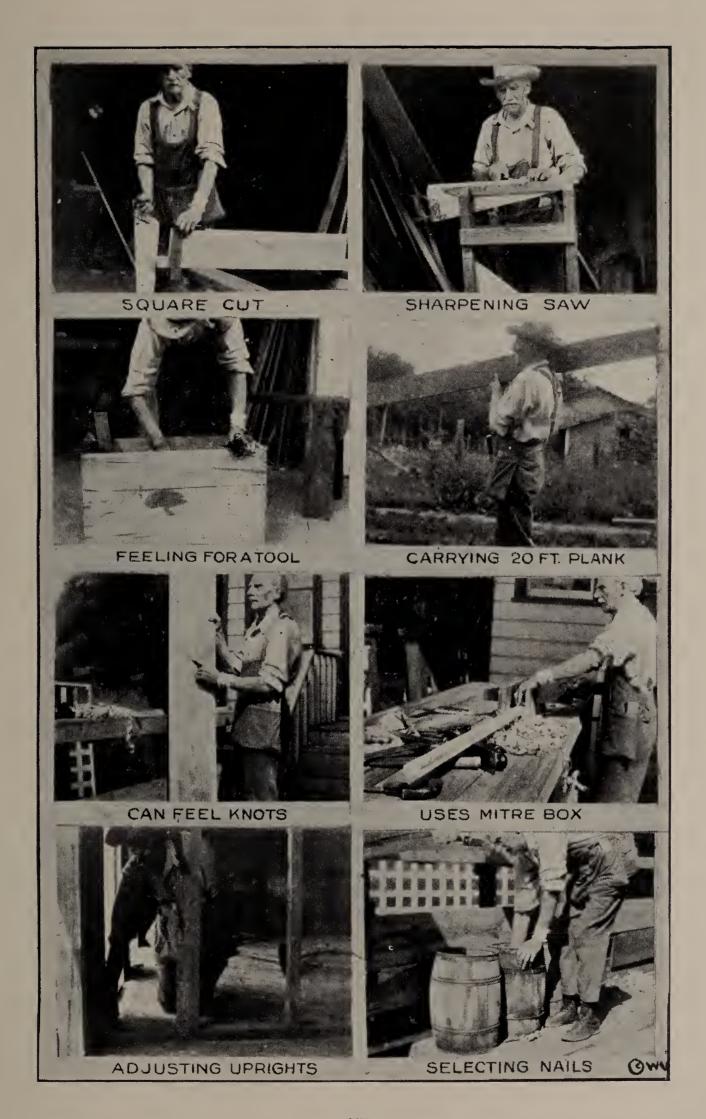
The builder then asked the time of day and when told it was late and dark, he volunteered to lead them to the front door. As he led them through the dark rooms, they filed out holding hands and to the back of his coat. Standing outside in front of the building, they heard the sound of the hammer reverberating through the dark and shallow interior.

As if actuated by the same feeling, the group walked away, puzzled and apparently stunned by the experience.

While sitting in their automobile, reluctant to start off, one of the company said, "While the sun was shining it all appeared a matter of fact, but this darkness puts an altogether different construction on this man's work. Really this HOUSE WAS BUILT IN THE DARK."

Constructed Without Eyes; by Touch in the Dark.





Ran By Swiftly



O F the many stories told by as many people, hardly any equals the feeling injected into it by a young man whose business carried him twice daily past the BLIND BUILDER'S structure.

Going back and forth, morning and evening this young man often satisfied his curiosity by lingering long enough to note the progress of the work. On one of these periodical stops, he observed the BLIND MAN putting up studs on the second floor right at the front wall, and plainly visible from the street. This appeared to this young man to be very hazardous. He stood across the street gazing up steadily for a long time meditating on the seemingly impossible scene he was looking at.

Just at this moment, one of the 8 ft. studs veered from its position and slipped to the ground; this causing the blind man to lean over the edge, put one hand behind his ear to catch the sound, and anxiously call towards the ground if any one was hurt. The position of the blind man leaning over with nothing to hold to but the end of a floor beam with one hand, kneeling, unnerved the young man. Then as if overcome by a sudden chill brought on by fear and thoughts of witnessing a man fall to his death, he quickly climbed into his car and hastily drove away. For many months thereafter when he approached this part of the highway a sort of fear overcame him and he would drive by swiftly. He now rejoices with the others that the blind man is through exhibiting his beam walking and roof creeping dexterity.

The Newspaper Men

A LL this soon brought the newspaper men to the scene. They were followed by the picture men and in a few days, the BLIND BUILDER and the HOUSE BUILT IN THE DARK were heralded all over the country. In a few more days, papers in foreign countries printed both the news and the picture of the builder. This was quickly followed up by the moving picture men, and in a short time THE BLIND BUILDER, HIS HOUSE, and the small berg called WAYNE, NEW JERSEY was known all over the world.

And for many months thereafter the BLIND BUILD-ER was besieged with visitors from the farthest end of the country and some from other countries; all commend-



In a few days papers, home and abroad printed the story.

ing him for his display of persistence and nerve, and shouted praises into his semi-deaf ears for his accomplishments.

At that time, however, the building was not fully framed, and the visitors were quite general in expressing a desire to see the house after it was finished. Many that had



Reporter Passing Flaming Match Before Blind Builders Eyes.

been there brought others to see what they termed "The Miracle House." Conversations and remarks by many of these visitors, indicated that they were brought there to be convinced. Often the remark, "Well, it is real," was heard. One group profusely apologized to their host for making sport of the news when he first brought them the information.

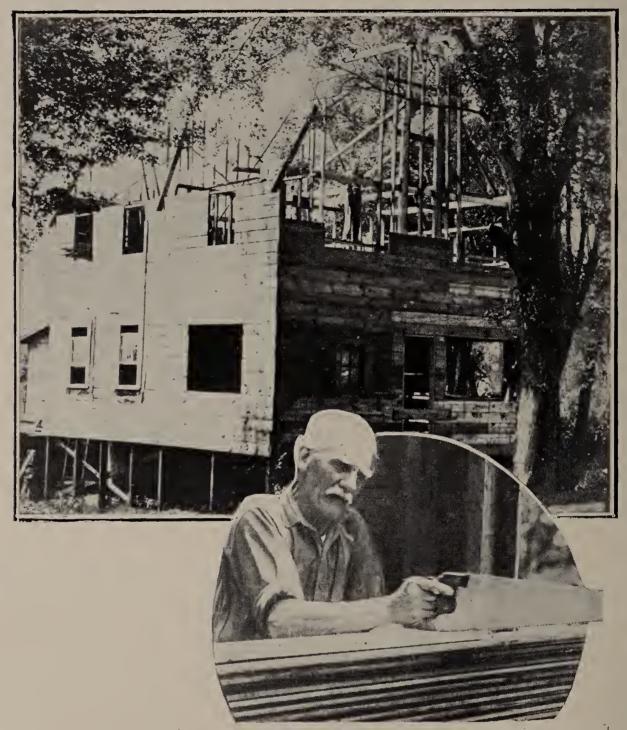
One of the newspaper reporters passed a flaming match before the BLIND BUILDER'S eyes, thinking perhaps that this would prove that he could see at least something.

One cannot blame a newspaper man, he has daily experiences while interviewing the general public and meeting with all classes, that make him skeptical and circumspect. But they generally report the full facts to the public; and the public is the great unbiased jury that always approves or censures according to merit.



Common Subject of Conversation.

SIGHTLESS MAN WORKING ON HOME AT WAYNE



Above is the half-finished house Francis A. Burdett is building Mr. Burdett can be seen standing on the second floor front. Below is Mr. Burdett using his saw

Blind Man Building New Home Uses Fingers for Eyes, No Plans

Wayne Man, Untrained as Carpenter, Nimbiy Walks
Beams of House Nearing Completion, Which He
Made Alone, but Has Never Seen

Staff Correspondent.

WAYNE, July 16.—Mr. Burdett! Oh, Mr Burdett! There's a newspaper man down here that wants to take your picture."

"Eh? What's that? I can't hear you with those trucks passing. Just a minute. I'll be right down."

The man in overalls working among beams of the top floor of a half-built frame house carefully put aside saw and T-square and picked his way among the planks to the ladder. He moved prudently, trying each board before he put his weight on it, for he is blind.

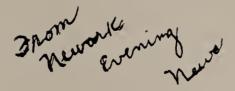
Francis A. Burdett has spent the last year building his house in Pompton road, Wayne. He designed the house, a Dutch colonial, the plans for which he "carries in his head." He knows all the specifications, and has placed every beam and driven every nail himself. It is no slipshod hit or miss job, this piece of construction, for Mr. Burdett is a meticulous worker and keeps his guide rules and bevel squares constantly in use. He works slowly, to be sure, for he has only his sense of touch to judge by, but his work is precise.

A Former Jewelry Maker.

The skill of this carpenter would indicate that before losing his sight he had been a first-class builder. On the contrary, he never had any professional training in carpentry and practised it only cursorily in odd jobs as a pastime. Before the accident twelve years ago which robbed him of his sight, Mr. Burdett was a goldsmith and watchmaker. He owned a jewelry store in Providence, R. I., in the work shop of which he made watches and fashioned delicate rings and ornaments from his own designs.

His hands are those of an artist-craftsman, long-fingered, slim and strong, though stained and scarred from handling lumber. They indicate the temperamental suitability of their owner for his former occupation rather than the present one for which he shows such surprising aptitude.

Mr. Burdett is building the house upon a concrete foundation originally laid for a bungalow of smaller meas-



urements. The transaction for the bungalow, which was to have been moved from its site several miles away was not completed, so Mr. Burdett decided to build upon the groundwork which had been laid.

The house is about twenty-eight feet wide and somewhat longer. On the first floor the builder has inclosed the framework and has set in the window frames and sash. A doorway has been cut from the kitchen, where the sashes are also in place, to the living room extending across the front of the house and the door, with glasswork, has been placed.

Mr. Burdett's plans call for another door from the dining room into the living room where the frames for two triple windows, one on either side of the front door, are ready to receive the sashes. He has drilled already for a water supply to be pumped to the kitchen.

It Is Ever Thus!

"That white pine and cypress, a choice load, is for the cabinets in the kitchen if my wife ever decides where she wants them," the builder said. He would not estimate the time it would take him to finish his job. He and Mrs. Burdett plan to occupy the house ar soon as it is ready.

He hauls the lumber up to where it is needed, planes and measures his boards as required, and always knows where the tools are.

His time is not given grudgingly to visitors by this patient worker. He does not have many interruptions at work, but those he has he welcomes with the friendliness and courtesy of one who is interested in people and has been mellowed by life even in the face of a misfortune that could embitter a man of less character. He whistles to the birds while driving a nail with sure, accurate blows and breaks frequently into some oldtime tune while sawing a board.

His blindness has taught him, Mr. Burdett said, the value of mechanical training and the importance of teaching blind children to work with their hands. He said all blind people should be taught to work independently and with skill.

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THE WORLD: MOND

PROOF OF POWER of Mind Over Misfortune-Blind Man With Uncanny Skill at Work Building House, Single-Handed, for His Family



BLIND MAN HAS FRAMED HIS HOUSE

Burdett Worked All Winter Perched High Up on Narrow Scaffold

HELP IN WORK

Explains to Reporter Why He Does Not Fall Down

Sightless eyes cannot overcome the will This holds true in the case of Wayne, N J Last September The World told how Burdett, totally blind twelve years, had completed the framing of a two story nouse. Working to a two story nouse working ticularly affected in this place.

alone, except for the labor required to dig the cellar and lay the foundations, Mr Burdett is now ready to put a roof on his home.

Throughout the winter he worked every day with the exception of the stormy ones. Occupants of the hundreds of automobiles that passed the lot on the Pompton Turnpike little realized that the tall, straight man perched high on the frame studs was bilnd He hammered and sawed with all the precision and vigor of a map who could sec.

The house is now covered with rough boards and is far from completed. But he toils daily from early morn to sunset Little by little the Dutch colonial house is nearing compietlon and when finished it will be a monument to Francis A. Burdett.

It is uncanny to watch this blind man, sixty-odd years of age, climb ladders, perch on narrow scaffolds and use the tools of the carpenter, from adz to plane Hc knows where each tool is to be found Every plece of material, from a ball of twine to the 24-foot timbers used in the con-

erringly he walked to the timbers. plicked them up and showed a re-porter for The World the accurate bevels he had sawed in them.

Why he doesn't fall Isn't much of mystery, when Burdett explains that he never puts his foot into a hole. If he doesn't feel something substantlal underfoot he doesn't shift his balance.

"Another thing," he said smilingly, "I have a distinct picture of every-thing It is in my mental eye."

He explained how the house will look after it is completed. Behind those stark eyes is a mind that visual-less everything to its minutest detail. Burdett was a jeweler before he was blinded as the result of being struck y a moving van.

When climbing around the building and walking he relies more on his sense of direction and judgment rather than guides. To the astonish-ment of the reporter, he lifted a heavy six by four timber, more than sixteen feet long

Before being blinded, Mr Burdet was a watchmaker in Riverside, R J. After his misfortune he taught himself to use carpenter's tools. Four years ago he and Mrs. Burdett

64

BLIND MAN BUILDS HIMSELF A HOME

Francis A, Burdett Sawing and Hammering on House in Wayne, N. J.

LOST HIS SIGHT BY INJURY

Watchmaker, Then Turned to Carpenter Trade

Francis A Burdett is blind Notwithstanding this handicap he is building a two-story home in Wayne, N J Perched high on a scaffold he hammers away putting frame studs into place with the accuracy of a skilled carpenter His sensitive fingers act as eyes and measuring rule

Twelve years ago Mr Burdett, now sixty-three, was a prosperous watchmaker in Riverside, R. I. One day he was hit by a moving van The injury affected his optic nerves. His sight began to fail Even as darkness closed about him, he refused to give up his shop. It was a struggle against

the inevitable.

Mr Burdett summoned his ngnting spirit. Blind now, he taught himself to make crates and boxes. For sev-cral years he worked in a crate fac-tory in Riverside. He carned the same wages and did as good work as men who could sec.

Once Built a Bungalow
Four years ago he moved to Wayne,
J. He and Mrs. Burdett went to live with a married daughter, Mrs. William Vanrenkamp. Three years ago he felt the need of having his own home once more. He figured the plans, bought the lumber and in two might be realistically as the limits of the limits. months, working alone, he built a two-room bungalow

Last spring Mr Burdett had a de-sire for a larger place. He bought a lot on the Pompton Turnpike. lot on the Pompton Turnpike. Again he figured out the plans with Mrs. Burdett's ald. A contractor dug the cellar and laid the foundation. In July Mr Burdett started to build the framework. Patiently, with only his hands to guide him, Mr Burdett has almost completed framing his house. Hands Are His Eyes. "I'm happy over my work," said Mr Burdett to a reporter for The World. "A blind man should work. He shouldn't use his affliction to get sympathy. I taught myself to use

He shouldn't use his affliction to get sympathy I taught myself to use hammer and saw Before I'm through here I'll have a nice home. I can see any hands tell me everything Now here's a hoard that isn't quite flush."

A few hlows with a hammer and the boord was straightened Mr Burdett demonstrated his skill when he assembled a knockdown window frame with the ease of a hoss carpenter. He showed a pump handle he had welded. "At present I'm living alone," he said "My wife is away nursing to help out a bit. But I get along very well. I cook my own food—roast beef, pork, anything. No trouble at all."

Mr Burdett is modest about his accomplishments. He has a cheerful laugh and a face that radiates good humor.

"Cloodby back when we have the house warm-

72 CHILDREN SNATCHED

HANDS ARE HIS EYES as He Skilfully Drives Together the Second House He-Has Built Since He Went Blind



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A Perilous Roof

T LAST the BLIND BUILDER had finished hauling all the 2"x6"x12' beams up to the attic floor, ready to trim off a few inches on one end and cut them on the needed bevel. That cardboard form figured out so long ago, that hung on the wall all these 18 months, would now be put to a test. If the BLIND BUILDER'S mind skipped a cog, while he was mentally figuring out that roof back there, then all these studs are wrong and there will be a great mess to rearrange and figure out. These thoughts ran through his mind and he appeared very serious as he climbed up to the attic floor to begin work. "Yes, that bevel square is the same as the bevel on the card," he murmured to himself. Then he took out a folding rule out of his hip pocket and measured again. "Yes, this line is $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; those rafters must be $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet. That's settled." "Now then, let me see. This line is 6 inches, and to have an overhang of one foot those hips must be 7 ft. long, that's settled. Now I'll cut this lumber."

Note—The rafters and hips here mentioned can be seen in the picture on page 18. That illustration shows that the BLIND BUILDER made a perfect job of both the hips and rafters; and is a splendid visible testimony of his miraculous work.

A few days later he was seen nailing rafters to the ridge board and to the hips. The cardboard form did not fail him. His mental arithmetic was verified by a snug fit in both rafters and hips.

About this time all the nervous people that lived hereabout were in a constant unsettled state of mind. Nothing seemed to allay the fears of the people. Even the BLIND BUILDER'S continuous exhibition of skill and his daily performances before their eyes, did not tend in the least to abate their fear, and each day brought a fresh new anxiety. People talking together on the street would look up unconsciously to see if the BLIND BUILD-ER was still up there or on the ground ready for the hospital or morgue.

It must however, be said that everybody enjoyed the Blind man's progress and looked on as if a war was in progress, and each day a battle won.



Cutting Bevel Along Edge of Steel Square.

Orders not Obeyed

Wille the BLIND MAN was adjusting the end rafter, on the extreme end of the overhang towards the street, he had to place himself in a hazardous position, more on account of the awkwardness and weight of the beam he was handling than for any other reason, a man stepped out of an expensive car and excitedly addressed a group of workingmen that were also looking up at the performance, and said: "Why don't some of you men go up there and place that beam for him?" "Ha, ha, You don't know him. We don't want to insult the man. He'll get that in place and he won't hurt himself either." These men felt sure about that, knowing what he had already done.

After about ten minutes of breath-taking swaying, jerking and adjusting, nearly dropping it to the ground, he finally proved true to his reputation, and put that beam in place. Then the assemblage dispersed with thoughts all their own.

MORE EXCITEMENT.

In a few days, after the nervous tension of the people subsided, a large truck was seen unloading nice new boards. This was a sign that the BLIND BUILDER

would stir up things again; for those that concerned themselves about this house knew these boards were for the roof.

He was soon seen standing on the top staging that was firmly erected, nailing boards to the hips. After a few days these boards were well on up towards the peak of the roof and many people began looking up again and with fear in their hearts they were heard expressing the wish that he would stop creeping over the roof. That worried expression accompanied with a fainting sensation around the heart, gripped them again. A farmer plowing in a nearby field, said, I couldn't keep my eyes off of him; I felt relieved when the team faced the other way and I had my back turned on him; I had the creeps going up my back all summer.





FROM VIRGINIA

She was nervous: he was excited, and it was a hot summer day. The Blind Man on the roof struck at the wasp. She thought he was falling and would be dead at her feet.

Came A Long Distance

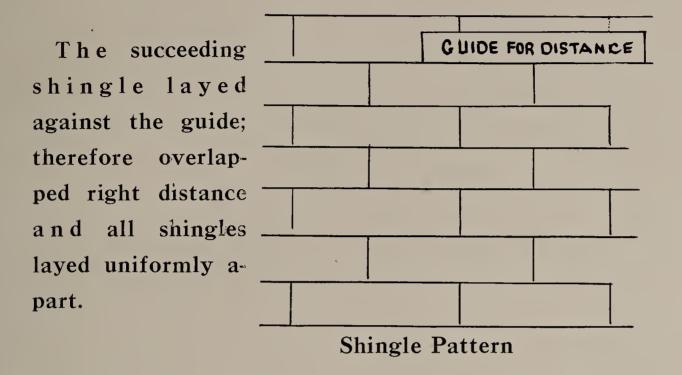
*UCKED away in a small Virginia town, somewhere in the interior amongst the beautiful rolling mountains, lives a woman that read in the daily paper that a blind man was building a house. Her very first impulse caused her to say: "Impossible, exaggerated! He must be able to see just a little bit. No man in that condition can hammer, saw, square, measure and fit lumber," for didn't she help her husband build that snug bungalow and was she not glad when all the difficulties were nailed down and the furniture moved in? Yes, and more, her experience was like those of other women all over the world, for she also said: "Never again." "If we ever build another house, a contractor is going to get the job and I am not going to look at it until it is finished." With these house building experiences still fresh in her memory, the day finally came when her husband decided on a trip north as a sort of vacation and also to look at THE BLIND MAN'S HOUSE.

While the scenery along the highways attracted and divided their conversation, every now and then the topic of THE BLIND BUILDER would become the main issue. Their curiosity and interest was greatly intensified as they found their way to WAYNE, N. J.

Just as they stopped their car opposite the BLIND MAN'S HOUSE, as if planned, the BLIND MAN was nailing sheathing boards on the roof near the street end of the building. After being informed that the man on the roof was absolutely blind and that he put that structure up all alone, they stood transfixed in both admiration and At that moment, the BLIND MAN on the roof leaned forward and stretched a lean arm to feel if the board was even with the end rafter. As he did this, the woman grasped her husband's arm, fearing for the man on the roof. She was nervous, he was excited and it was a hot summer day. Just then a wasp landed on the Blind Man's hand, he shook lit off, and blindly struck at it in the air with a hammer. She thought he was falling and would be dead at her feet. She quickly put her hand over her heart, shrieked and fainted. After restoratives were applied she awoke and asked if he was dead. In answer she heard the sound of the hammer from the roof.



Layed Shingles on Roof



This house located on the state highway always attracted a new crop of interested folks, and while the people in the immediate vicinity now credited the BLIND BUILDER with being able to accomplish anything connected with building a house, these that came later did not pass through all the former excitement and when they saw him shingling the roof, their questions, interest and nervous fear for the man's safety was a repetition of that of former days.

There are six shingles layed wrong side out on the south side of the roof. These shingles are a testimony of the BLIND BUILDER'S fixed, persistent and inmovable determination to succeed.

It was cold; the gravel shingles wore the skin through his sensitive fingers until they bled; he lost feeling in his fingers, but still kept on with the work. That is why the mistake occurred. The most common question asked was: "How can he tell that they are the right distance apart and on a straight line?"

The Blind Builder devised many things to help himself with, during the course of his building construction. One of these can be seen in the illustration on Page 75 which shows a pattern he used to get the shingles correctly laid.

One of the Neighbors

ONE of the village's regular morning visitors to the post office and general store exclaimed in subdued tones of horror: "Isn't it just terrible?" Some that stood around the store waiting for the postmaster to finish sorting the first mail, thought a terrible accident had just occurred somewhere on the highway or on the railroad nearby and began moving up closer to hear the news.

After a few seconds of suspense, and the lady drew a long breath, she said: "Oh, that Blind Man up there on that roof again. He worries me so I cannot do my work. It seems that I am always at the window or the door looking, looking."

"Oh, is that all? Don't worry about him," came a chorus of replies. "we did enough of that from the time he first began. He'll be all right." "Oh, did you worry about him also? Well I do wish he would get through and stop creeping over that roof. From a distance it appears that he is slipping and it makes me nervous."



"Oh! Isn't It Just Terrible."

The Of't Repeated Question

O VER two years have passed, the minds of many people of all classes were forced to a radical change in opinion.

Everybody that came to visit the builder attempted discern "HOW HE to DOES THESE THINGS." When they left they knew no more about that quesbefore tion than they came; excepting that they verified the fact that he really did it, which perhaps they doubted before they came. This question "HOW HE DID IT" was



Hanging a Door.

asked by everybody and no doubt will be a standard subject of inquiry forever after.

This question will however, never be definitely answered, for the BLIND BUILDER cannot answer it himself. When asked, his answer invariably is: "THE LORD GIVETH AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY." And he feels a power of discernment accompanied with a supersensativeness he did not formerly possess.

All his actions while slow, careful and studious, are precise and ceremoniously exact. It is this that causes everyone to wonder if he cannot see just a wee bit.

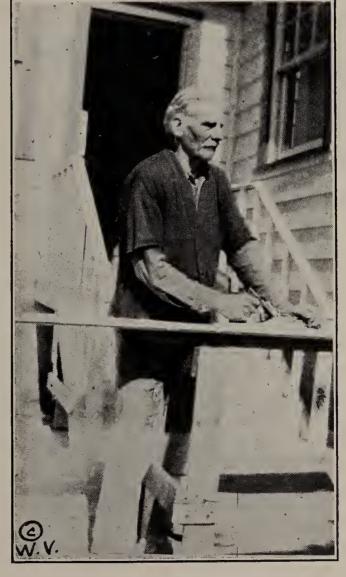
This question was asked of the BLIND BUILDER hundreds of times.

He is totally blind, but he has developed a supersensitive touch in both hands, in fact all over his body. He seems to discern everything with an acumen not possessed by the average person. Those that know him best often refer to him as a walking encyclopedia of mechanical facts with an infallible memory and a fixed determination to succeed.

This is borne out by the work the BLIND BUILDER has done and it is not overstated. He is 65 years of age and not robust. He labored early and late in all kinds

of weather, without any one to cheer or assist him. He lifted, dragged, sawed and hammered into place all that heavy timber in that large three story house alone.

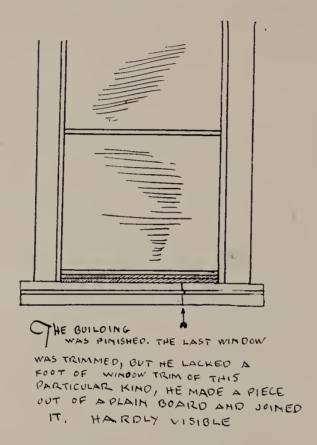
The word "alone" here used also applies to his home life. His wife being a trained nurse was away from home months at a time and after working late into the night, worn, bruised and tired, he was led home to his two room shack where he again found himself alone.



Planing.

Here he cooked and baked his own meals as skillfully as he accomplished everything else. He can start and control a fire in a coal or oil stove by feeling the heat as skillfully as anyone with sight.

Aside from laboring all day long without sight, this



latter mentioned condition in his home life presents a summary of seemingly impossible facts.

Even here he continued to pleasantly accept circumstances and deftly keep house.

The reader should stop here a moment and meditate.

This condition was not for a day, a week or a month, but continued two and one-half years. Did it require patience? Was

there any joy in it? Or is he differently constituted than others?

This is a perfect lesson for all mankind. It encourages the faithful and difuses light to the optimist. It condemns the slothful and the sluggard. It discards the can'ts and the complainer. It supplants the incompatible, discordant, repugnant and contradictory and teaches the gentle lesson of "patient endurance" and proves that man's "Will Power," nourished by right thinking can overcome all obstacles.

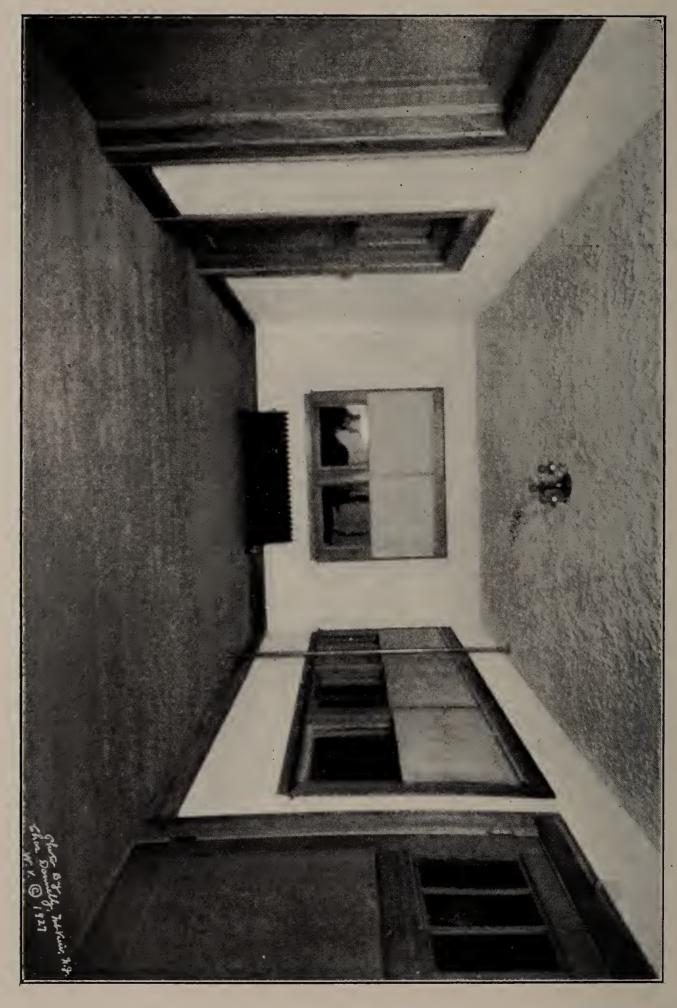


HE OFTEN FELL ASLEEP

It can safely be said that there is not another parallel case on record. A careful study from the BLIND BUILDER'S whole status from beginning to end will reveal obstacles and encumbrances that had to be hurdled. These were matters that harassed him as time passed in addition to the impedment caused by his blindness.

After working all day, he at times sank into a chair to rest awhile before he began cooking his supper, and often fell asleep, not awaking until midnight or later. Yet, the next morning he was punctillously led back and labored as cheerfully as if he had all the comforts of a home.

He has a full set of carpenters tools which he used as dexterously as any man with sight, and he remembered from day to day, through the long dark days, yes, years, all the necessary details as the work progressed, and finally



Partial View of the 12x26 Ft. Spacious Living Room.

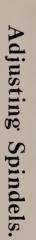
set before the world a finished product that is by no means an ordinary building.

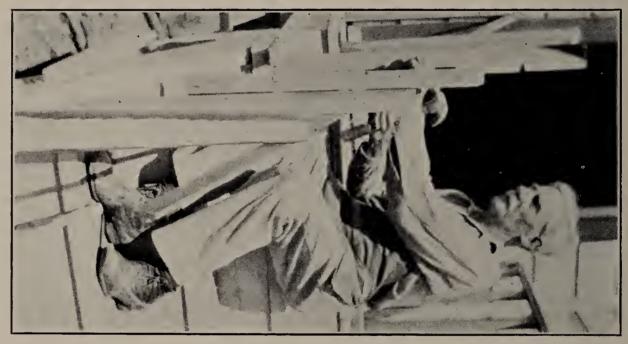
Probably it can be said with impunity that his work is somewhat superior to that of the average workman. This can be seen in many parts of the building. The lumber delivered for the rear steps was square and out of harmony with his idea; so he rounded the railing and spindles with a small plane. He was never lost for an idea or a way. The illustrations on the next page show the Blind Man in action. The top rail is perfectly joined and appears as if it was continuous and of one piece.

To get this fit careful manipulation was required.

Experienced men of the building trade often stood around and observed him at work. During conversations he would shuffle off, get the needed tool, return, continue on with the talk and also proceed with his work, lay down a tool, hang up another as the case may be, take another from a nail on the wall or feel under the improvised bench among shavings or wood ends for one just needed; always find what he was looking for and continue on as if his handicap simply limited him in speed only. During the conversation one would often forget that the man was blind and working in the dark by touch. While standing there, suddenly recovering from such forgetfulness, and again realizing that the Blind Man did all that work by touch, was an unforgetable reaction on the mind.

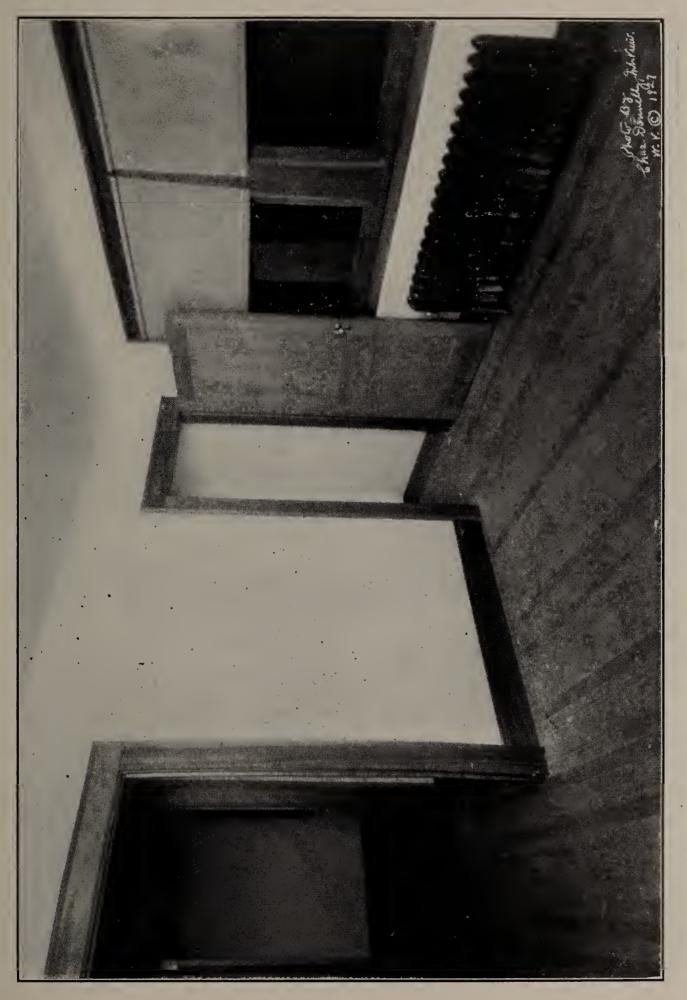
Rounding Rail.





Finished Job.





Partial View of the Large Southeast Bedroom, Showing One of the Large Deep Closets and Hall Entrance Into Opp. Bedroom.



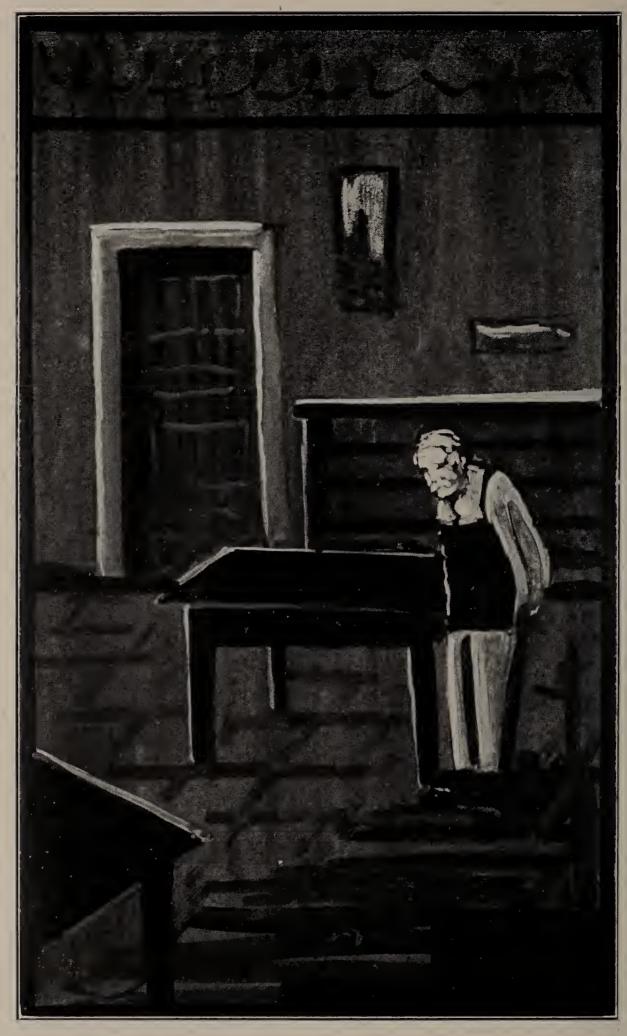
The Bath Room.

Partial View of Enclosed Rear Porch.



Partial View of Dining Room, Showing Stairway.





There seemed to be no end to the circumstances that made it necessary for my wife to pack her grip, rush off to some hospital or private home and leave me stranded in the dark.

The Blind Builders Own Statement

I nanswer to many urgent queries from hundreds of people, the BLIND BUILDER said:

"To succeed at anything, be it a large intricate undertaking, or of less significance, a person must have—1st, a "Reason," 2nd, "A Purpose," 3rd an "Interest" in the objective and 4th a "Determinate Will" to do it. In my case the first three points I mentioned were very clear to me, and I believe, outside of my own set will to do something worth while my condition in life forced me to do it. I am totally blind and 65 years old. For years my wife found it necessary to work at her profession as a nurse to support us both. This necessitated her constant absence from home. Neither of us had any real comforts. I learned to cook my own food, bake bread and do about everything needed to be done around the house. I built small tables, chairs, dressers and small articles for children, including glass serving trays. To a certain extent this helped me to while away the many lonesome hours, but there seemed to be no end to the circumstances that made it necessary for Mrs. Burdett to pack her grip, rush off to some hospital or private home and leave me stranded in the dark alone. Often I wouldn't hear her voice for a whole month.

This had been going on for 12 years so we decided to try to earn our way for the rest of our days by conducting a lunch stand on the Turnpike. This we both felt would succeed, especially so with the additional sale of those things that I made for children. With this in mind it built up in me, both the

reason and purpose; and since my wife and I colaborate in everything, we both kept the objective alive and our interest in the building of this house never waned a moment but increased as we went along. It was a tedious job; many times I said to myself, "Wish I could see", but it was not tiresome, I enjoyed it. When we started this building idea several years ago, we first had to overcome the difficulty of financing it. My blindness here proved a blessing to the project.

After making a final payment on the lot; we arranged with the material people to pay the material on the

monthly plan. Of course, being blind my progress was rather slow, and it seemed for several years the bill seldom ran over the amount my wife was able to pay as she earned it. We continued on this plan until we had a value established as a foundation for a loan. Finally when the more expensive material had to be purchased, we raised a mortgage.

I have been asked many times how I can plod away here on this building early and late, wet and dry, hot and cold, making slow progress and still remain cheerful. I always felt that cheerfulness is an asset to success and is needed to reach a goal, whether a man can see or not and is that encouraging sound that is heard by himself in his humming tune as he works. A person never knows all that he is talented to do until he trys. When the light of the day was closed out and I first became blind, I immediately fought depression and melancholy, and overcame it. That was the beginning of my success to remain cheerful, which ultimately also built this house. Many people stopped here and told me that the building is a credit to the community.

Of course, I cannot see it, but I have a fair conception of its appearance. I have felt every inch of this building with my hands and kept the finished house in my mind as I worked. My hope is that it will pass critical inspection and that the effort will help others as unfortunate as myself to try to reach some worthy goal, and that will still urge on others.

I believe that age old question, "THAT I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER." While I cannot help any in boosting things along generally, I am glad that there is that bare possibility that some one now and in the future might profit by seeing this house which so many seem to think is a worthy object lesson.

Decorated With Practical Medals

COME, let me show you some practical medals I received from some of my enthusiastic friends." Then he led the way to the cellar. Stopping short on the cement floor at the base of the steps he remarked: "I did not know that when I started this building I was going to do something commendable, but they say this is the only two and one-half story house on record, ever built by a blind man anywhere at any time.

The first medal I want you to see is a bit too heavy to wear on a coat," and he began putting his arm around a beautiful steam heater. "This", he continued, "is a medal presented to me by the Richardson-Boynton Furnace Company, 260 Fifth Ave., New York City. Mr. Roger Williams, Manager of the Heating Department, said that this heater has no competition and no other manufacturer has anything its equal. They presented me with the best they had to give. I can hardly pass this without feeling it all over."

One visitor said: "This heater would speak in kindly tones next winter." "Now, come over here and I will show you another. This is an electric pump. You see out here we do not have running water as in the city but this pump gives us the same accommodation and forces the water from the well through the house. It stops and starts automatically. This medal was presented to me by

the Duro Pump Company, 50 Church Street, New York City.

Running his hand along a series of connecting pipes and fittings overhead, he remarked: "These are medals presented to me by B. & O. Sales Corporation, Paterson; W. H. Gurney Co., Paterson; N. J. Engineering Supply Co., Passaic; Passaic Plumbing Supply Co., Passaic; friends of Mr. George H. Hahn, plumbing and heating contractor of No. 18 Passaic Avenue, Passaic, N. J.

Then he lead the way upstairs and felt the radiators and said: "These medals were presented to me by the American Radiator Company, Main Office, New York City. Every radiator in this house came from there. Notice how solid all these medals are. I want my many friends and visitors to see them. Mr. Hahn presented me with the labor to install this entire heating system." Then with a smile he said: "Real medals." "Useful medals indeed. I never expected to be decorated with them."

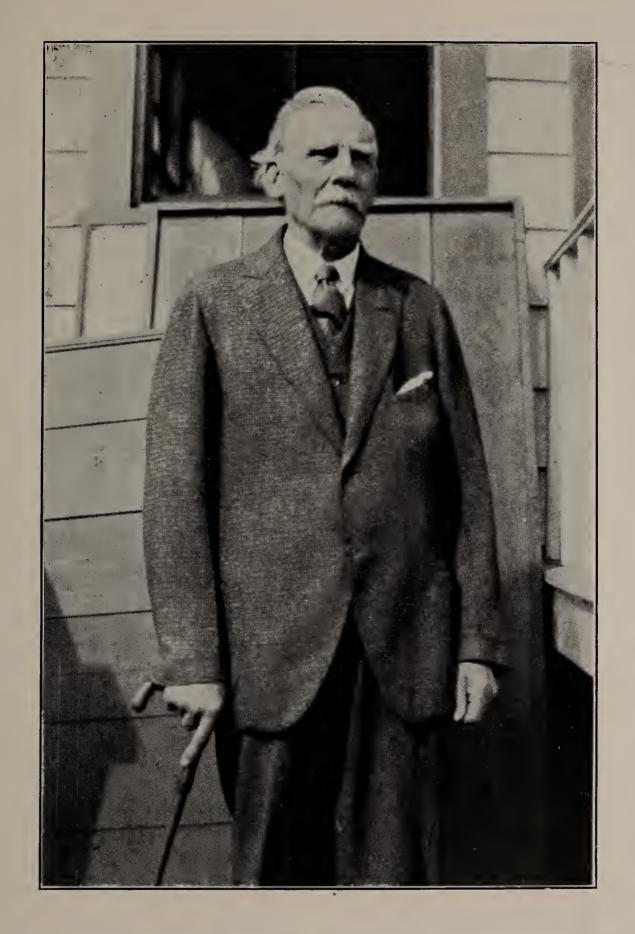
Running his sensitive hand up and down a door frame, he said; "This is "Gulf Cypress Trim. The flooring in the living room and dining room is oak and the rest of the flooring in the building is Long Leaf Yellow Pine. The framing is all West Coast Fir. This class wood was not in my original specifications, but Mr. Harris of W. O. Harris, Inc., of Lincoln Park, N. J. from whom we bought all the material, made it possible. I always loved the appearance of that nice natural grain in any wood, and it

seems to make the house cooler and brighter; while I cannot see it I can feel it and imagine the rest from former memories.

You will notice we finished all the interior trim in the natural. Talking about medals again: The Murphy Varnish Company of Newark, N. J. and The Boston Varnish Co. of Boston, Mass. both decorated me with varnish. I couldn't very well parade that around pinned to my vest so my wife and a neighbor applied it to all the floors and the trim.

We do not know of any event in our life that gave us more satisfaction and joy than we now get out of this building. We planned, worked and finished the job. By it we gained a home and a good many friends from far and near.





FRANCIS A. BURDETT

THE BLIND BUILDER
HE FINISHED THE JOB

Nearly Lost His Investment

A CROSS the road from the BLIND BUILDER'S HOUSE in its original setting with that same old semi-circular driveway, stands that old landmark, the village general store and post office, conducted by Messrs. Demott and Ryerson, still dispensing as in days of yore, everything from Georgia molasses to shoe strings.

On a nice spring day, as the wind blew a gale just before the sap rose to the stem. in some unknown way, the high brush and weeds caught fire some distance in the rear of the BLIND MAN'S HOUSE.

The Postmaster, Mr. David Ryerson and Mr. Louis Hopper, a local business man, looking out of the store window saw the fire endanger the building. Quickly sounding the alarm, they gathered the neighbors and with brooms, pails of water from a nearby brook and switches of brush, after a long battle, extinguished the fire. But for the neighbors' alertness this story of the BLIND BUILDER would in all probability not be told.



Post Office and General Store Wayne, New Jersey.

"SUCCESS"

EVERY human born on the earth has a keen desire to excel in something. Every parent at various times during the growing age of their child soliloquizes over the child's future success in life. Much has been written, books have been printed, teachers, principals, college professors and orators have spoken in no uncertain tones on the philosophy of "Success."

Hundreds of thousands of people in all walks of life have, during all the past ages, schemed, planned, figured, sacrificed or gambled to win "Success." In some countries and amongst some very enlightened people in our own country, "Success" is associated with superstition, while still others call it luck. Some even go so far as to say that a successful man is dishonest.

There is still another class that claim every faculty of the human machine must be normal; while others believe only such as have financial assistance can climb the ladder of success.

And millions more have as many more hypotheses to offer, but always according to their own idle fancies that were recorded on their minds by environment and association with error.



Just an ordinary looking kitchen cabinet. However, it's value is much greater than one would perceive at the first glance. The Blind Builder made it out of grocery boxes. He knocked the boxes apart; pulled the nails; cleaned and planed the wood; and here it is. He is now making glass doors for the upper part.

AN OLD PROVERB—

says: "To succeed is success." The Blind Builder had this in mind when he decided to build that house, nothing else entered into the details of construction. He had four points that spurred him on. Not one of these were prefigured with any of the aforesaid maxims on success; neither did he think he was gambling or perchance luck would possibly favor him. Nor was he superstitious that he was born under one of the bad signs in the zodiac which caused his blindness and that the Gods of the Constellation would pity him.

No! No! and a thousand times No! Just four points that put a land mark on this earth. Yes he put on the records of existence, a two and one-half story Dutch Colonial house "By touch" and it is reported that there is no record of a blind man ever constructing a house of this height and size. And considering his physical condition and advanced years one can only conclude that every so-called excuse offered throughout the ages for lack of success has been nullified by this BLIND BUILDER.

Let us review his four points and add another point which he mentioned as an asset:

1st He had a "REASON"

2nd He had a "PURPOSE"

3rd He was "INTERESTED"

4th He had a "DETERMINED WILL"

5th He kept "CHEERFUL" throughout.

"REASON AND PURPOSE"

He had a good reason to pull himself out of an unfavorable position in life to one more advantageous. Was he not alone most of the time? Yes, and when his companion was at home there was always that uncertainty—for a message might come at midnight or noon and then he would be left alone to shift for himself.

His "Purpose" was to reach the end of the "Reason" and build that house; start that little business going and end his life of loneliness and provide for the years that were rapidly approaching.

In his personal statement the Blind Builder said he hopes his accomplishment would help those as unfortunate as himself to reach some worthy goal.

He does not say anything about those not as unfortunate as himself. No, he firmly believes that people having sight need no encouragement from him, for can they not meet every emergency; spring forth like a flash at an opportunity; meet all of life's various approaches by using all the five senses endowed by the Creator; instead of doing all things slowly by touch?

O, Yes, this is quite reasonable, and right here is the lesson that speaks louder than all the words spoken by orators, teachers, professors and printed books. The definition is clearly set forth by a Blind Man and the question for success is answered.

HOW IS IT ANSWERED?

The four points formula topped off with cheerfulness and hard, persistent, patient and untiring work is the whole sum total.

"WAS INTERESTED."

Accompanied with the definite "Reason" and "Purpose" he had in mind, he was enthusiastic during the many months he blindly hammered, sawed, pulled and hauled, that the work was a pleasure instead of a drudge. Think of it, a blind man building a house, which necessitates the hardest kind of manual labor, constantly humming a tune of his own, day in and day out, month after month, for several years. Neither splinters, shin bruises, cold or hot or wet weather retarded the work and his interest never waned. He kept the object of his "Purpose" in mind and hammered his way through to the end and to "Success." "For to Succeed is Success."

Neither did he procrastinate; that terrible something called by that name, known also as dilatoriness; postpone; put off until another time.

"DETERMINED WILL"

Around this is woven all the worthwhile things ever accomplished in this world. The opposite to this is "WEAK WILL", a lack of concentration power which is generally accompanied with "I'll do that tomorrow", but tomorrow never comes. This Blind Builder handicapped by a dead vision, with only his hands to guide him, had a "determined will" to build a house; lost no time starting the work after he propounded the "Reason" and "Purpose", stuck to it cheerfully, through all kinds of weather conditions for two and one-half years, and now he greets his thousands of admirers from all over the earth with the same cheerful greeting that he always extended to visitors, no matter how tired or bruised he felt, and now stands amidst the gathering throng, an admired hero.



If he had been one of the vacillating kind or of the complaining type, this beautiful home would only be a mirage in the air. If any one in this world ever had a good reason to quit the job, the Blind Builder had that good reason. He could have said: "I am 65 years old and this work is too hard," or "If I could only see, I would do it," etc. etc. No! He did not look for pity nor for any excuse, for these two are synonymous—nor did he use the word can't—a coloquial contraction for cannot, used by so many although it is known that his fingers bled most of the winter months while working, caused by rough lumber, gravel-shingles, and the cold weather.

SCRAP HEAP.

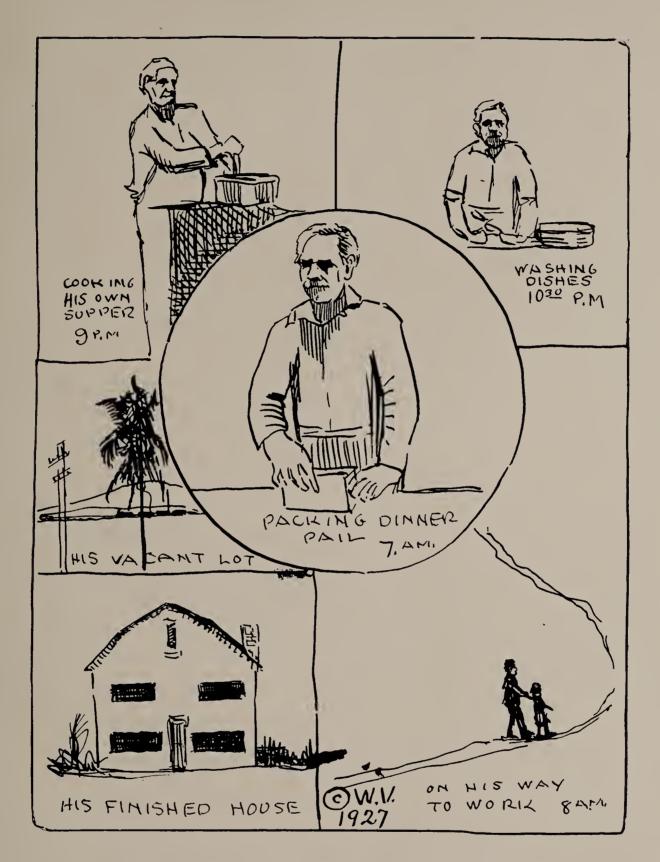
This throws into the scrap heap all maxims of men for success. It removes all superstition; elements of gamble, luck, the idea that all the organs of the body must be perfect; and obliterates the jealous stigma of dishonesty (commonly used by the ignorant) from the successful; and presents the four points of the BLIND BUILDER, i.e. "REASON," "PURPOSE," "INTEREST," and a "DETERMINED WILL," associated with Cheerfulness as a true maxim for "Success."

These points adopted by anyone are bound to lift him from an undesired place and form a bulwark against laziness, procrastination, superstition, vain imaginations and poverty.

Every home, every business, village or city, that adds to its environs a successful man or woman, enriches itself beyond visible comprehension. Any person possessed with that thorough character that is needed to carry any difficult and painstaking project to a successful conclusion, or becomes a success in his particular line of work, illuminates and encourages others by his very presence.

Just one such thorough living example, leading out in any commercial professional, or political establishment can turn defeat into success and lead an army of frustrated men to a fortunate, favorable and prosperous issue.

The mere gathering of gold and silver is not "Success." A man may inherit a million and find himself in a poor house in twelve months. Fortune might smile on another and through hardly any effort on his part he becomes rich, proud, haughty, arrogant and selfish.



"CONSISTENCY THOU ART A JEWEL."

He won success under the most difficult handicap; blind—lived mostly alone, 65 years old and not robust. Now there stands a fine house on the lot that was vacant.

Still another rare case might beat the gaming table or race track and become wealthy. Another man may have inherited a business, conducted by hired brains, so established that it coined money and he became righ. But neither of these through patient endurance, coupled with trials and mental strain, which developed character to a "DISTINCTIVE QUALITY" could be termed a "Success," for "Success is to Succeed." And these did not travel the path to claim the title. They may even lack the necessary efficiency to carry on.

ALL QUESTIONS.

Reader, what is your rating among men? How does the world look to you? How does it look at you? Have you climbed and slipped on the greasy pole of life? Have you given up? Have you not started yet? Are you a failure in your own estimation of yourself? Are you waiting for someone to open a way? Are you wishing for money to get your start? Or, are you waiting for some superstitious idea to come to pass? Probably you are weak-willed? Or do you give up too easily? Are you a persistent grouch? If anything like this has kept you from succeeding, in your respective line of work, remember the Blind Builder and his four points formula which put a fine house on the Newark-Pompton Turnpike, in Wayne, N. J., under the most difficult handicap.

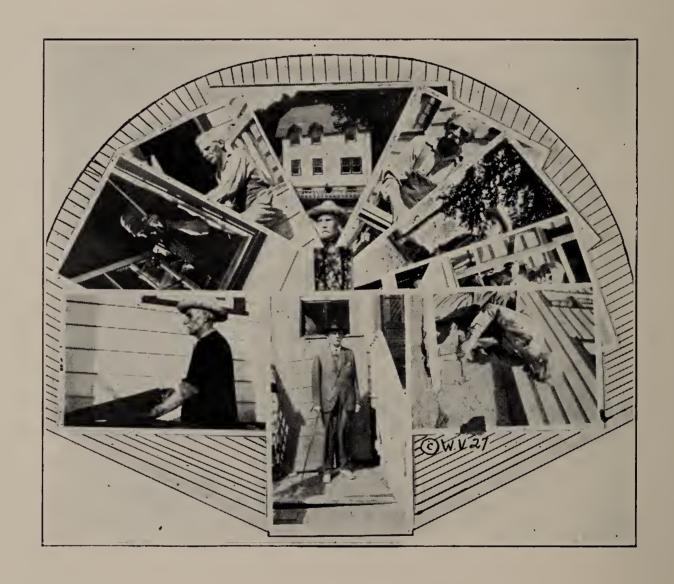
Remember it every time you feel like quitting. Every time you procrastinate; every time you slip back and get discouraged; when you feel that the other fellow is lucky and you are not; every time that foolish thought comes to you that successful men became so through dishonesty. Yes, remember it when you first get up in the morning; before you start the days' work. Think of it at lunch; speak of it at supper and enthuse your family and your friends. Get renewed courage and pass it on to others. Let the Blind Builder be your inspiration. If a blind man climbed to success by an adopted formula, why not you. Use the same rule.

AND REMEMBER THIS:

"To Succeed is Success". If you succeed in that which you are now engaged, that will build up in you a character that will raise you above the present and fit you for something higher up the ladder of life; and in this way reach that enviable and commendable place among men held by the successful.



THE FOUR POINTS FORMULA OF THE BLIND BUILDER WHO BUILT THE HOUSE IN THE DARK, is hard, persistent, patient, work; not a common 8 hour day, but planning, figuring, thinking, yes, working into the night when others are reveling or retiring, topped off with genuine cheerfulness.



Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.

Which, having no guide overseer or ruler

Provideth her meat in the summer and gathered her food in the harvest.

How long wilt thou sleep, "O, Sluggard?"
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 6:4—11

Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thine house.

Proverbs 24:27







